

Laid back luxury.

Open the gate and step straight onto the sand, or find yourself just footsteps away from National Park walks and the boutique shopping and dining of Hastings Street.

With direct access to Noosa Main Beach and views over Laguna Bay, Netanya is a haven for laid-back luxury.



HOLIDAYS

FOR COUPLES

Annual 2019
AUD/NZ \$8.80

*Bali
bliss*

The ultimate
guide to an
indulgent
Indo escape

*Find
your
paradise*

SWEET
DREAMS

20

iconic
hotels to
wish list
today

Tropic
wonder

How to have the
time of your life
in Thailand



Magical Madrid + A culinary conquest in Chile
+ The Goldie grows up + Discover Finland's romantic
Åland Islands + Take a bite out of Hong Kong



WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS: MALDIVES' LEADING RESORT 2018



SCAN ME, BOOK NOW!



PARK HYATT MALDIVES™

HADAHAA

LUXURY is PERSONAL

Perfection of Pool and Ocean At The Park

Experience our refreshed Park Sunset Ocean Pool Villas for a dip to endless vistas while basking under the Maldivian sun or a romantic late night dip under the starlit skies.

Receive a complimentary upgrade, from a Park Villa to Park Pool Villa or Park Water Villa to Park Sunset Ocean Pool Villa, when booking on our website or directly with us. Comment '**Rare Maldives Escape**' when making a booking for this benefit to apply. This added benefit is valid for your stays between 1 April 2019 to 31 October 2019.

To discover more, call +960 682 1234 or email maldives.parkhadahaa@hyatt.com



CORAL SEA RESORT

Coral Sea Resort features a variety of hotel rooms including deluxe suites, one, two and three bedroom apartments, penthouses and beach houses. All accommodation is serviced daily and offers an enticing array of facilities including an award winning oceanfront restaurant, private dining seaside gazebo, cocktail lounge, fitness room, massage facilities, private jetty, 25 metre pool, wedding chapel, 200 seat function room and tour desk.

P 1800 075 061

W coralsearesort.com



CRUISE WHITSUNDAYS

REEFSLEEP UNDER THE STARS

Stargazing by night and exploring by day – Reefsleep offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend a night sleeping under the stars at the Great Barrier Reef.

This two day, one night adventure includes transfers to and from the reef, overnight accommodation in comfy swags under the stars, all meals plus activities at the reef.

Prepare yourself for an intimate and totally unique experience that will stay with you forever.

P +61 7 4846 7000

W cruisewhitsundays.com



DAYDREAM ISLAND

Daydream Island will once again welcome guests from April 2019, unveiling the new look premium resort in the heart of the Whitsundays. The premium resort will launch new signature dining concepts, relaxed bars and waterfront rooms and suites, as well as the iconic Living Reef which has been expanded to include an education centre and underwater observatory.

E reservations@daydreamisland.com

W daydreamisland.com

Escape to the heart of the Great Barrier Reef



tourismwhitsundays.com.au



FREEDOM SHORES

Freedom Shores captures the natural surrounds of the ocean and lush Whitsunday tropical forests. Set in a hidden valley close to Airlie Beach, Freedom Shores Resort provides unique boat bungalow accommodation along with well-appointed resort suites with wide views of the ocean across Pioneer Bay and back towards the Airlie Beach township. Stay for an immersive visit into Whitsundays life.



RIDE TO PARADISE

Ride to Paradise is a multi-award winning all-inclusive two-day, two-night resort stay package showing travellers the best of the Whitsundays. Ride to Paradise offers serenity and stars by night at the exclusive Paradise Cove Resort and once in a lifetime experiences during the day including visiting Whitehaven Beach, Hill Inlet Lookout and snorkelling in the pristine water of the fringing Great Barrier Reef.



THE WHITSUNDAYS

The Whitsundays is the ultimate romantic destination, with beautiful rustic hinterland trips and long walks on the most incredible white sandy beaches. Whilst giving your heart to another, fly over our iconic heart reef. The Whitsundays is easily accessed through 2 major airports, Whitsunday Coast Airport (Proserpine) and Hamilton Island Airport, both offering daily flights from key Australian major cities.

P +61 7 4946 1979

W freedomshores.com.au

P +61 7 4946 4444

W redcatadventures.com.au

E reception@tourismwhitsundays.com.au

W tourismwhitsundays.com.au



IT'S *Time*



YOU'VE DREAMED OF A VACATION,
NOW IT'S TIME TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

With over 35 properties in Hawaii, our stylish hotels and spacious condominium resorts are located in some of Hawaii's most desirable locations. Dreamy? Definitely. Reality? Yes.

Vacation better. Become an A-List member.
Join the A-List and receive access to exclusive discounts and perks. No points, no hassles – just rewards.

AquaAston.com/a-list | +1.808.564.7603

AQUA ASTON
HOSPITALITY 70 YEARS
1948-2018

HOTELS FOR ALL

Oahu Maui Kauai Hawaii Island Orlando Costa Rica

2019 ANNUAL ISSUE

contents

15 **Go here now**

Party in Morocco, celebrate Chrissie in Estonia and feel the drama in Tasmania

17 **Intrepid travel**

Epic adventures for your to-do list

25 **20 iconic hotels of the world**

Plush places to check in and chill out

38

Slow down and take
in the sunset in
Seminyak, Bali



32 Pink City pleasure

At the Fairmont Jaipur in India, guests are treated like royalty

38 The lovers' guide to Bali

This jewel in the Indian Ocean is brimming with adventure, indulgence and romance

58 Go slower in Samoa

Discover this Polynesian island's unique beauty and traditional charm

65 Land of smiles

Whatever your holiday goal, Thailand will deliver, from the beach to the city

75 Nordic romance on enchanted islands

Welcome to the little-known Åland Islands, the ultimate Scandi paradise

81 Culinary conquests in Chile

Head to South America to experience some of the best meals of your life



75



94



81



65

86 Hong Kong heroes

In this bustling city, tradition and modernity collide with delicious effect

94 Captivating Madrid

Take a bite out of the Spanish capital, where food and drink reign supreme

101 The mellow yellow coast

The Gold Coast has grown up, with bohemian romance and spectacular nature experiences at every turn

109 Wine hunter

Pack your bags! From Mudgee to Margaret River, Australia's wine regions set the scene for a delightful weekend away

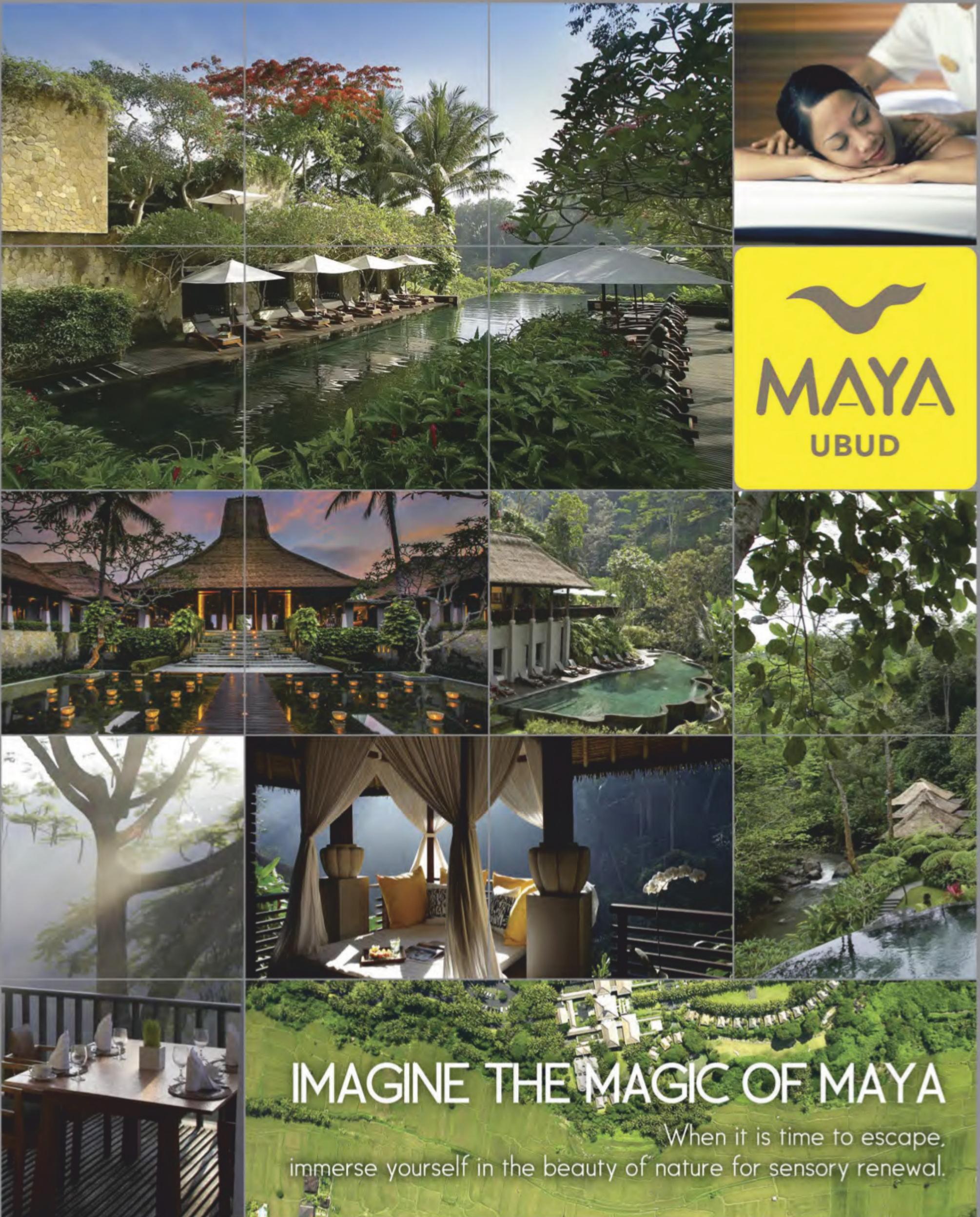


25



86

Fast-paced and vibrant, Hong Kong offers a city break like no other



MAYA
UBUD

IMAGINE THE MAGIC OF MAYA

When it is time to escape,
immerse yourself in the beauty of nature for sensory renewal.

Jalan Gunung Sari, Peliatan, Ubud, Bali 80571, Indonesia
E. info@mayaubud.com | mayaresorts.com

Maya Ubud Resort & Spa

@mayaubud

Maya Ubud Resort & Spa



Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort

Aitutaki. “The world’s most beautiful island.”

Tony Wheeler, founder of *Lonely Planet*

Private Island Overwater Heaven, for Adults-only

- Perfect for Heavenly Honeymoons, Babymoons, Anniversaries + Dream Weddings
- Stunning Adults-only 5 star resort for guests aged 16+ | 36 bungalows+private pool villa
- The ONLY Overwater Bungalows in the Cook Islands
- The ONLY private island resort in the Cook Islands | An island all your own
- The ONLY resort set directly on the World's Most Beautiful Lagoon, Aitutaki
- The World's Best Lagoon Views | White sandy beaches
- Flying Boat Beach Bar & Grill | Bounty Restaurant & Bar | Private Candlelit Dinners
- SpaPolynesia | Over The Moon Wedding Packages
- GETAWAY TV show (Australia) - one of the World's Top 50 Resorts
- ISLANDS magazine (USA) - one of the World's 12 Best Private Islands

Nature created the View, Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort created the Experience





from the editor...

To say Hong Kong is one of my favourite cities in the world is an understatement. So, when an

invitation came to check out the city's food scene, I jumped at the opportunity. In a town where the only constant in its restaurants is the dizzying speed at which they open, I knew there would be much to discover since my last visit two years ago. And I wasn't disappointed. We ate and drank our way through both sides of this dynamic city and every single meal I devoured was in an establishment new to me. Read about our delicious discoveries on page 86.

After chatting with journalist Matt Brace about his recent trip to Finland's Åland Islands, I just knew we had to share this special destination with you. It really drew me in as somewhere to experience a way of life quite unlike our hectic urban/suburban existence. Part of Finland, yet most locals speak Swedish, there are more than 6,500 islands in this Baltic Sea archipelago, with a serenity and isolation that is utterly romantic. Matt and his wife

enjoyed the Åland Islands from a 'boathouse' (a cottage on the water) booked through Airbnb, which sounds like the dreamiest perch from which to enjoy the region's many charms. Turn to page 75 for a breath of fresh Nordic air.

It wouldn't be *Holidays for Couples* without a major Bali feature. We're just as obsessed with this blessed isle now as we were 23 years ago when we published our first edition — and the team looks forward to checking out what's new (while still dropping by some old favourites) on our annual extended visit. Bali is always evolving, and the dining and bar scene rivals any world-class tourist hot spot. Natalie Bannister has put together your must-take guide to the island's key areas (starts p.38), breaking down where you need to eat, drink, spa and what you shouldn't miss.

Short breaks are part of our culture here in Australia, and perhaps in these fast times we need these mini-recharge breaks more than ever. Australia boasts a fantastic catalogue of unique, boutique getaways — places that are far from cookie-cutter, many just made for romance. After two decades, you could say we know a thing or two about romantic getaways,

and you can delve into our little black book of Oz retreats on p.117. While you're there, be sure to read Craig Tansley's Gold Coast article on p.101. I lived on the coast for years (granted, it has been 20 years since I left!) and loved reading about how this iconic party paradise has grown into a sophisticated coastal escape.

Finally, Thailand. I've personally been going to Thailand at least once (and often more) a year for the past 25 years, yet there are regions I'm yet to discover. Simon Ostheimer is our Asia-based writer and who we often go to for the low-down on what is happening in the region. For this issue, he's put together a list of the must-do Thai destinations (find it on p.69), but thrown in a few locations many of us are yet to discover. I know I'll be adding another week to my next holiday in Thailand and discovering Koh Chang or River Kwai. How about you?

TANYA JOSLIN

Associate Publisher + Editor



SUBSTANCE OVER STYLE

the tongsai bay • natural to the core



www.tongsaibay.co.th



HOLIDAYS FOR COUPLES

PUBLISHER + EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Rhonda Bannister

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER + EDITOR
Tanya Joslin

DEPUTY EDITOR
Natalie Bannister

ART DIRECTOR
Jian Oba

SUB EDITOR Penny Carroll // FEATURE EDITOR Nicole Deuble // FEATURE WRITERS Simon N. Ostheimer, Craig Tansley, Matthew Brace, Natalie Bannister, Christine Retschlag, Yasmin Noone, Tanya Joslin, Rhonda Bannister, Emily Russ, Nicole Deuble

PRODUCTION
Chelsea Davis

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT MANAGER Melissa Bourn
For all advertising enquiries, phone +61 (0)7 3394 8422

ACCOUNTS & SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER Kathy Lidstone subscriptions@graphicpublishing.com.au

Graphic Publishing, publishers of HOLIDAYS FOR COUPLES holidaysforcouples.travel; GREAT DESTINATION WEDDINGS greatdestinationweddings.com.au; QUEENSLAND BRIDES queenslandbrides.com.au; QUEENSLAND HOMES queenslandhomes.com.au

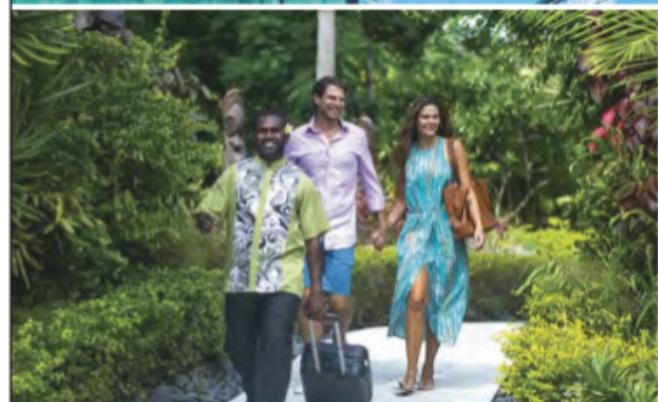
Holidays for Couples is a registered trademark of Prescribed Publications Pty Ltd. Copyright by Graphic Publishing. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part thereof without permission is strictly prohibited.
NOTICE: While every effort has been made to ensure that all information in this magazine is accurate, no responsibility can be accepted by the publishers for entries supplied by organisations, firms or individuals, including copyright of supplied material and/or typographical errors. Advertising enquiries: +61 7 3029 7700. Freelance contributions are welcomed by the magazine and submissions should be addressed to: ginny@graphicpublishing.com.au. The publisher accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, illustrations or photographs. This edition may contain competitions, special offers or surveys which, if you enter, may require you to give personal information to Graphic Publishing. This information may be used by Graphic Publishing and any companies supplying product or special offers, unless you advise us not to: phone +61 (0)7 3394 8422. The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the writers only, and not necessarily those of the publishers. The information contained in advertising is the responsibility of the advertiser, and no advertisement is to be deemed as an endorsement by *Holidays for Couples* magazine. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy of information and prices before going to print, no responsibility can be taken for changes. Graphic Publishing, The Bower: 433 Logan Road, Stones Corner, Queensland, Australia 4120, holidaysforcouples.travel

FOLLOW US  @HolidaysforCouples |  @queenslandbrides |  holidaysforcouples.travel |  @holidaysforcouples |  @holidaysforcouples



The Havannah VANUATU

Breathtaking Beachfront Location
The Ultimate Romantic Escape
Luxury Villas | Exclusively for Couples
Exceptional Service | Exquisite Cuisine



+678 35600 | thehavannah.com | reservations@thehavannah.com



ESCAPE TO FIJI'S FINEST BEACH RESORT FOR A ROMANTIC SPA GETAWAY.

Enjoy a few days away from the world and treat that special person in your life to something truly magical. Reconnect and create new memories in paradise with our Romantic Spa Getaway experience.

Book now for a relaxing intimate escape and enjoy daily breakfast, one Chef of the Year Navo dinner experience, a 60 minute Fijian Aroma Massage for two and a luxurious Cleopatra bathing ritual in the privacy of your room.

Find out more at fiji.intercontinental.com/special-offers, or email enquiries.fiji@ihg.com or call us on +679 673 3455.

FIJI

BORA BORA

NEW YORK

WASHINGTON

PARIS

LONDON

DUBAI

BANGKOK

HUA HIN

SINGAPORE

DANANG

ADELAIDE

MELBOURNE



INTERCONTINENTAL.
FIJI GOLF RESORT & SPA

Live the InterContinental life.



an idyllic haven for your perfect romance

Sanur | Ubud | Nusa Dua | Jimbaran

MORE ABOUT US



P. 62 361 705 777 F. 62 361 705 101
E. experience@kayumanis.com

KAYUMANIS



wanderlust

The ultimate travel for two



Solomon Is. Romance

A large, dramatic waterfall cascades down a dark, rocky cliff face into a pool of water. In the lower right foreground, a man in blue swim trunks and a woman in a pink dress are seen from behind, embracing each other. The scene is lush and tropical, with mossy rocks and dense greenery surrounding the waterfall.

GO WHERE AND WITH WHOM YOU FEEL MOST ALIVE

Just three hours away from east coast Australia lies a land of cultural mystique, unspoiled exotic locations, tropical tranquillity and beautiful, friendly people. It's pure, romantic adventure.

visitsolomons.com.sb



▼ Follow your bliss to Marrakech

So, you've danced your way around the world's best festivals... or have you? The list isn't complete until you've experienced the Oasis Festival in mystical, magical Marrakech. It's held just 15 minutes from the bustling city centre, but this is one chilled-out celebration. Float mind and body in the mainstage pool, recharge with a yoga session and fuel up with a tempting selection of local snacks (in an onsite souk, naturally). Away from the dance floor, step into a wonderland of cocktail bars, spa and makeup stations, hookah lounges, yoga spaces and some of Marrakech's best food vendors.

13-15 September 2019. theoasisfest.com



Feel the love in Croatia

The name says it all. The Love International music festival, held a 15-minute walk from the sun-kissed Adriatic township of Tisno, is perfect for couples who want to let loose. There'll be parties on beaches, boats and secret islands, plus onsite accommodation that's made for two, including apartments, shiny aluminium Airstream trailers and glamping tents. This year you can even pitch your own tent under the stars among the area's charming olive and fig trees. 3-10 July 2019. loveinternationalfestival.com

◀ Embrace Tasmania's dark side

Ready to get naked? In a festival of memorable moments, Dark Mofo's standout is still the annual Nude Solstice Swim. The assembled brave souls (more than 1000 in 2018) dive into Tasmania's chilly Derwent River to welcome the light after the longest day of the year. Not your usual festival fodder, but perfectly aligned with an event that takes its cues from ancient winter solstice rituals. Events across the island include the Dark Mofo Winter Feast on Hobart's docks and public art displays including those at MONA (Museum of Old and New Art). Oh, and there's usually a ceremonial burning. If you're a couple who loves a little drama, head south for the winter. 7-23 June 2019. darkmofo.net.au



◀ Shop Estonia's charming Christmas market

Europe is a veritable chocolate box of Christmas markets during December, but our new favourite is found in Estonia's historic capital of Tallinn. This delightful North European getaway showcases medieval streetscapes and pagan traditions with a vibrant, modern edge. Claiming to have the oldest Christmas tree in Europe, Tallinn really gives the festive season an authentic local feel. The cobbled streets of the Old Town come alive with acres of lights and pretty stalls selling mulled wine, seasonal sweets and snacks, traditional handicrafts and contemporary gifts. The bonus? Because you can cross the Gulf of Finland to Helsinki in a couple of hours by ferry, you can combine two snow-dusted escapes into one totally romantic white Christmas itinerary.

visitestonia.com

Go here now

From sand and sea to snow and Dark Mofo. Pack your party gear, there are so many places to celebrate in 2019



◀ Rock on at the Grand Canyon's centenary

Clocking up 100 years as a national park in 2019, it's the perfect time to cross the Grand Canyon off your bucket list. The incredible colours and sheer scale (it's 1.6 kilometres deep!) of this natural wonder are just as breathtaking as ever, and the park is celebrating with a special calendar of events. The fastest (and most glamorous) way to transfer from the glitz of Las Vegas to the majesty of the canyon is a helicopter tour – try Papillon's 'Grand Celebration' which flies over the Hoover Dam and lands on a private plateau within the canyon for a Champagne picnic. So, if you were thinking of popping the question... nps.gov; papillon.com



bali *Mandira*
BEACHRESORT & SPA



Club Villa



Mandira Suite



Azul Beach Club Pod

In a place where dreams are lived out and memories built....

- > Starlit Beach Pool & Swim Up Bar > World class Spa Experience
- > Beachfront Dining Experience > AZUL Beach Club

30% STAY UP TO MARCH 2020 & RECEIVE UP TO
DISCOUNT FOR EARLY BOOKING

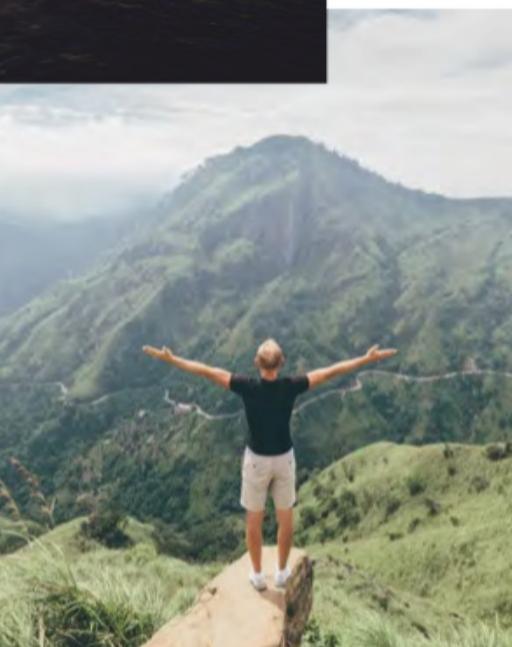
Intrepid travel

Add these global adventures and epic experiences to your “let’s do it!” list



Visit 2019's coolest country ▶

With Lonely Planet flagging it as *the* country to visit in 2019, it's time to bump Sri Lanka up your bucket list. Like, to the top! Fabulous food tours, incredible animal encounters, ancient temples and ruins, and gorgeous beaches make this tiny treasure south of India a must. Join the nature lovers flocking to spectacular World's End in the highlands of Horton Plains National Park: a sheer escarpment with a drop of 870 metres accessible via a four-kilometre walk. For a more challenging trek, try nearby Adam's Peak, a 2243-metre pinnacle reached via 5000 stairs! Don't worry, you can revive with a local tea from one of the sellers along the way. The footprint-shaped hollow (called Sri Pada or 'sacred footprint') near the top has been attributed to Buddha, Lord Shiva and Adam (after being booted out of the Garden of Eden). Worth a look, no? srilanka.travel



Get sporty in Japan ▶

With the 2019 Rugby World Cup and Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games on the horizon, Japan has an extra glow about it. Embrace the outdoorsy vibe while exploring this richly diverse destination with the one you love. Snorkel the stunning subtropical Okinawa Islands in southern Japan. Soak up the sunrise on top of Mt Fuji and walk the spiritual Kumano Koda pilgrimage trails through the forests south of Osaka. Or shimmy down the trails in the ski enclaves of Niseko, Hakuba and historic Nozawa Onsen – a day of snow followed by a soak in a local hot spring (onsen) is a combo you'll want on repeat.

jnto.org.au

Dive into a luxe marine safari ▶

Imagine a holiday so special it comes with a photographer to capture those pinch-me moments. Not to mention a full support crew including butler, masseur, chef and dive instructor. It's the A-lister treatment you can expect on a new series of marine safaris from Secret Retreats. Swap dry land for eight to 12 nights aboard the 26.1-metre Sequoia yacht, exploring the wonderous wilderness of the Bird's Head Seascape archipelago in Indonesia's West Papua region. Ideal for one or two couples, the custom-designed yacht (inspired by classic timber vessels but with all the mod cons) features two deluxe suites, sky deck and full kitchen. Each day is a fresh adventure: think swimming through waterfalls, enjoying the onboard cinema, and drifting around coral-rich dive sites (including exquisite Raja Ampat) teeming with fish, whales, dolphins and turtles. secret-retreats.com

Become a wildlife warrior in Cambodia ▶

Want a getaway that does good – more give, less take? We hear you. Conservation tourism is on the rise and Cambodia's Cardamom Tented Camp offers an exemplary example. Located in the country's largest national park, Botum Sakor, the area was once a hotbed of poaching and illegal logging. Now, thanks to the efforts of the Wildlife Alliance, Cambodian government, and 12 forest rangers (supported by the Cardamom Camp) it's in revival mode. Even rare native animals, including the endangered clouded leopard and sun bear, are starting to return. Nine safari-style tents are located within an 18,000-hectare concession in the park – this isn't five-star glamping but you do have a comfy bed, ensuite and access to the Riverbank Restaurant overlooking the Preah Tachan River. The real highlight is in the conservation activities: think replanting native trees, helping monitor local wildlife and kayaking excursions. You can see why the camp is a finalist in the 2019 World Travel and Tourism Council Tourism for Tomorrow Awards in the 'Changemakers' category. cardamomtentedcamp.com →



Sleep under the stars in Uzbekistan ▶

Although known for its magical Silk Road cities, the Central Asian hub of Uzbekistan is still a bit of a holiday wildcard. But change is in the air as the country begins to embrace government reforms and take a more relaxed approach to tourism. So, get there before everyone else does! Once you've finished flooding Instagram with the stunning Islamic architecture and swooning over the country's famed silk, head out of town into Alexander the Great territory, the Kyzylkum Desert. Experience the arid beauty on a camel ride, cuddle up beside the campfire, and try to hold your own as the vodka toasts kick off before retiring to your mushroom-shaped *yurt* (a conical tent favoured by the local nomads). Not much has changed out here since Genghis Khan terrorised the region (he, too, slept in a *yurt*) so you'll find a wonderfully remote kind of romance.



◀ Take your romance on the road in New Zealand

Got a bicycle bucket list? Then it's time to add the picture-perfect Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail in New Zealand's South Island. The full adventure (four to six days) begins at Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park and cuts across the island to Oamaru in North Otago, with overnighters in lodges, lakeside retreats and even working high-country stations along the way. Highlights include stellar mountain, lakeside and ocean scenery, an abundance of fresh NZ air, and the option to stargaze together in a 38°C hot spring pool at Tekapo Springs (on a floating hammock, no less). The clincher, though, is the option of electronic bikes (e-bikes) to help you up the hills!

alps2ocean.com

Meet the rellies in Rwanda ▶

Ready to see Rwanda? For animal lovers the first port of call should be the high-altitude 'cloud forests' of Volcanoes National Park: a haven for some of the world's last remaining wild mountain gorillas. This beautiful area will soon have a new base for wildlife encounters, Singita Kwitonda Lodge (named in memory of a local silverback gorilla). Occupying a lush landscape of meadows and wetlands bordering the national park, the couple-perfect hideaway is slated for an August 2019 opening. The low-impact design of eight suites and a four-bedroom villa linked to a central lodge includes a huge reforestation effort, in keeping with African-based Singita's strong conservation commitment.

rwanda.singita.com



◀ Herd reindeer across Russia

"There is no bad weather, only bad clothing." This popular Nordic saying rings oh-so true in the Yamal Peninsula on the northern outskirts of Russia, where the temperature can dive to -40°C (Yamal means 'edge of the world'). If you like your holidays authentic, immersive and seriously hardcore, you can live with the region's indigenous reindeer herders, the Nenets, as they swap their winter digs for the summer pastures of the Arctic Circle. You'll dress and eat like a local, sleep in a traditional reindeer-hide tent called a *chum* (pronounced 'choom') and travel with these resilient nomads on their epic pilgrimage of up to 1000 kilometres. It's not for the faint-hearted (and yes, reindeer features on the menu) but it does offer an incredible opportunity to experience the tundra. secretcompass.com H



CAPE PANWA HOTEL
PHUKET, THAILAND

Romantic Escapes

A romantic sunset stroll along the private beach,
your balcony whirlpool spa in the comfort of
your own suite, a beachside candlelit dinner
under the stars – all this and much more,
at Cape Panwa Hotel.



TOP 10
WEDDING HOTEL
AWARD
2016

HolidayCheck

RECOMMENDED ON
HolidayCheck
2018

QUALITY
SELECTION
AWARD 2013

TOP OF
THE REEF
2018

TOP TEN BEACHFRONT
HOTELS IN THE WORLD
2013

tripadvisor*



27, 27/2 Mu 8, Sakdidej Road, Cape Panwa, Phuket 83000, Thailand
Contact us: Complete Travel Marketing, Level 3, 194 Miller Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

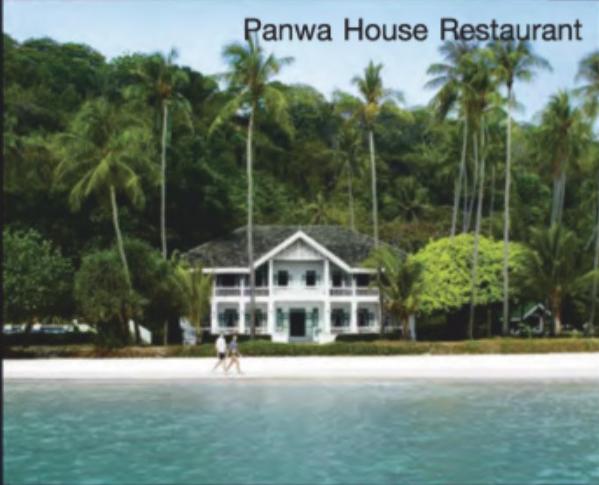
T: +61 (0)2 9018 9322 E: sales@ctmarketing.com.au

[f capecanwa](#) [capeandkantary](#) [www.capecanwa.com](#)

Beach



Panwa House Restaurant

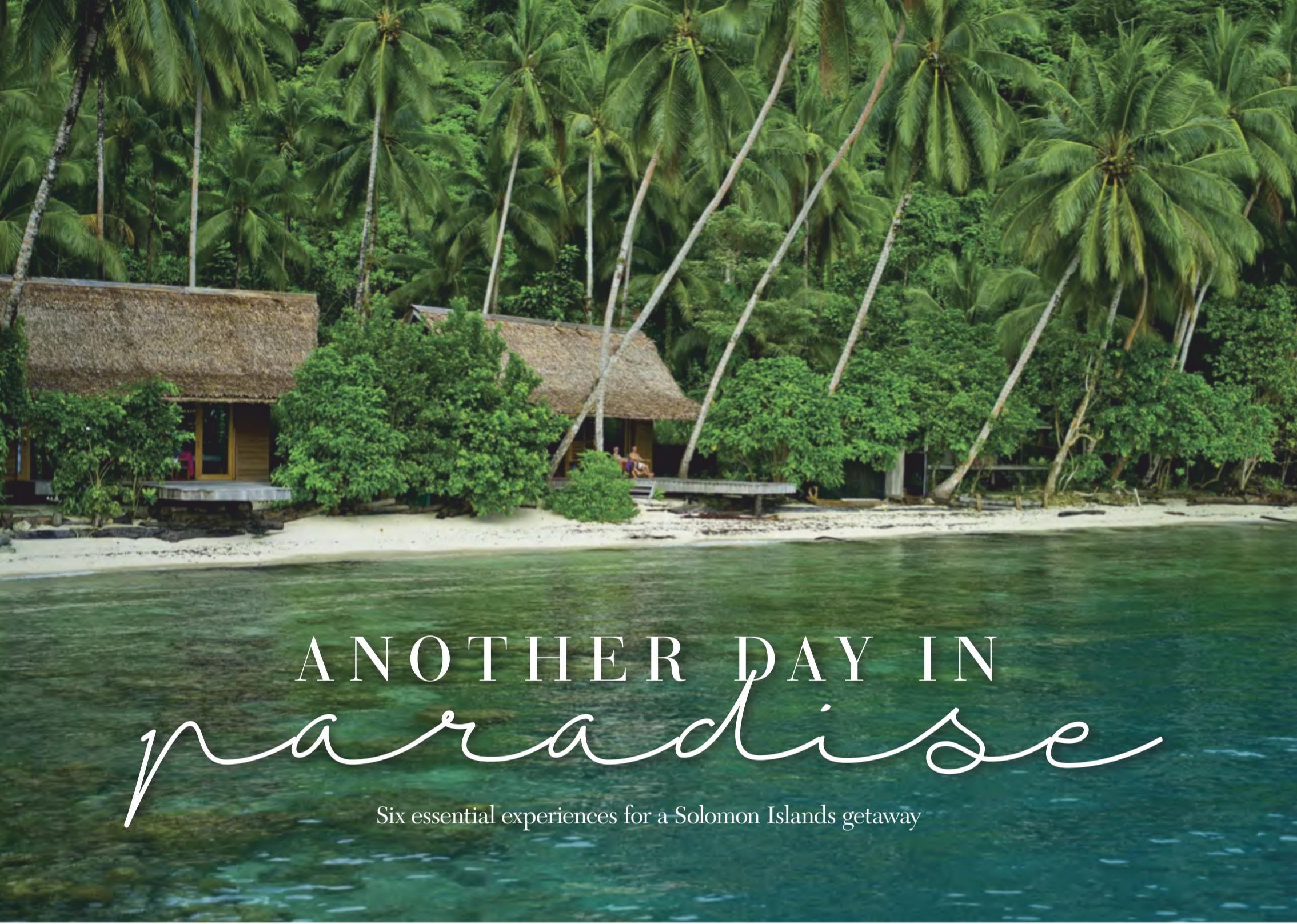


The Cape Absolute Suite



Wedding Terrace





ANOTHER DAY IN *paradise*

Six essential experiences for a Solomon Islands getaway

Dreaming of a pristine tropical oasis? Enjoy the best that the Solomon Islands – or the ‘Solomons’, as the locals call it – has to offer with these unforgettable experiences.

1. Go island-hopping

With 900-odd specks of sand awaiting couples, the Solomons seem *made* for island-hopping.

After touching down in the capital of Honiara, catch a scenic small-plane flight out to the Western Province for clusters of jungle-topped isles surrounded by turquoise waters – a blissfully unspoiled region known for its heart-stopping adventures (diving and surfing are big here). Don’t miss visiting Gizo for its enchanting villages, Olosana for its deserted beaches and fabled Kennedy Island where JFK found himself stranded on a WWII mission.

There’s also plenty of postcard-perfect islands to be found just off the coast of the main island of Guadalcanal. Dotting the Marau Sound’s pristine waters, the aptly named Sand Island (there’s only one tree for shade here) is a must-visit for a beach picnic and Marapa Island is great for a taste of local culture.



2. Try the seafood

Unsurprisingly, the Solomons is where you'll come across super-fresh seafood. Here, local fishermen literally pull up to local restaurants and resorts with their catch of the day *every* morning. No specials board needed, just meet them at the jetty to find out what's good.

Gourmands, lobster and crayfish are regularly on offer, minus the usually eyebrow-raising price tag. Grilled in garlic, butter or lemon juice, or cooked on a pizza (however you like it), they're a hedonistic delight you'll want to indulge in over and over again. Heck, you can even get lobster omelettes in the Solomons on any given day – #BrunchLife.



3. Discover an incredible underwater wonderland

There's no denying that the Solomons' main attraction is its snorkelling and diving. And for good reason. With warm, crystalline waters and seemingly endless coral gardens on offer here, you'll have a hard time getting out of the water.

The Western Province is a go-to for water babies. Divers, delve into the deep to discover coral-carpeted fighter aircraft and sunken ships from WWII, plus eye-catching marine life. Prefer something a little more leisurely? Take your pick of gorgeous island-hugging reefs for a snorkel or simply step off the boardwalk of your above-water bungalow to see giant clams and gatherings of exotic technicolour fish.

4. Explore the stunning inland regions

Head to Guadalcanal to seek out time-forgotten waterfalls, sip freshly husked coconuts at the markets, wander through fascinating WWII battle fields or learn more about the Solomons'

very special culture and traditions with an insightful village visit.

Or, head to New Georgia in the Western Province and channel your inner Indiana Jones at sacred Skull Island. Here, a local head chief will lead you to shrines containing the skulls of prominent chiefs and vanquished enemies from generations before – adventure-seekers, this one's for you.

5. Make like Kate and Wills

If the Solomons sounds familiar, chances are you saw it all over the news when the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge honeymooned here in 2012. Take a leaf out of their books and live like royalty when you stay at one of the destination's ruggedly romantic island resorts.

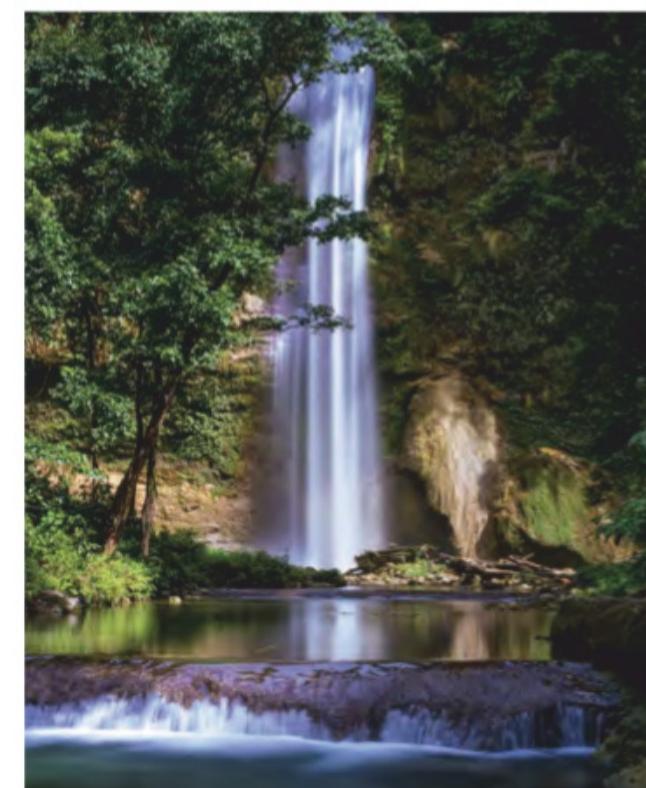
For a Western Province escape, Fatboy's Resort and Sanbis Resort boast secluded beach and overwater thatched-roof bungalows – hello dream honeymoon. Or go all-out and retreat to the same place as Kate and Wills and claim one of Tavanipupu Private Island Resort's tropical-luxe hideaways for yourselves. Hammocks and swaying palms included.

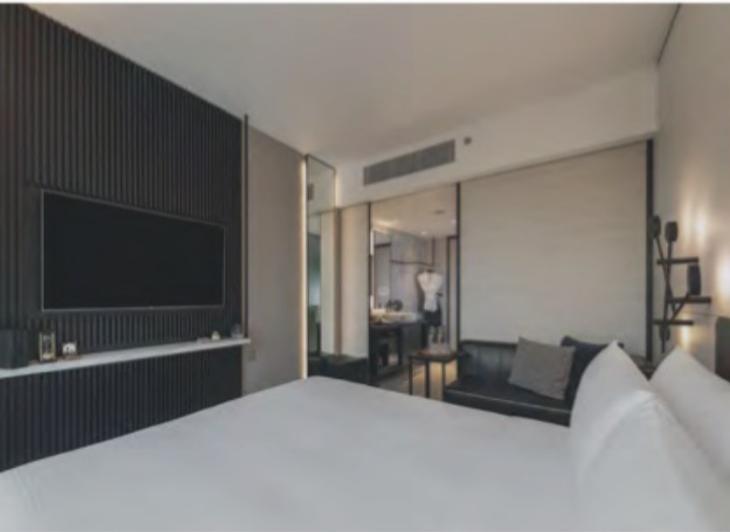
6. Switch off

If you haven't yet made good on your New Year's resolution to put down the (damn) phone, the Solomons promises the perfect remedy. One of only a few destinations in the world where you can do a digital detox, this tranquil destination technically receives phone and internet connection but it's very patchy. And that's okay with us!

The beauty of a stay in the Solomons is experiencing its simple pleasures. Swap Netflix and Insta for enjoying a coconut oil foot massage, darting from island to island on a motorboat, living out your *Little Mermaid* fantasies under the water's surface or just relaxing lagoon-side in a deckchair. Siri? I don't know her.

// Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau
info@tourismsolomons.com.sb
visitsolomons.com.sb





The Outpost Hotel presents a trendy island getaway for adults and couples. Inspired by Sentosa's Heritage as a colonial military base, the 193 guestrooms are a stylish interpretation of black and white design, with crisp lines and a sharply contrasting palette. This upscale hotel is built for those seeking exclusivity, privacy and appreciate the attention to detail. Room amenities include toiletry kits by Australian beauty brand APPELLES Apocatherapy & Lab, pillow mist kits for turn down service, and customised mini bars from a selection of premium wine, energy bars, and snacks, with compliments from the hotel.

THE OUTPOST

HOTEL

S E N T O S A

Opening from July 2019

10 Artillery Avenue, Sentosa Island, Singapore 099951 **P:** +65 6722 0801
E: info.toh@fareast.com.sg **W:** www.theoutposthotel.com.sg /TheOutpostHotel

20

ICONIC HOTELS OF THE WORLD

The pillows are fluffed, the door-staff are gloved and the Champagne corks are popped – step inside these famous properties for a once-in-a-lifetime escape



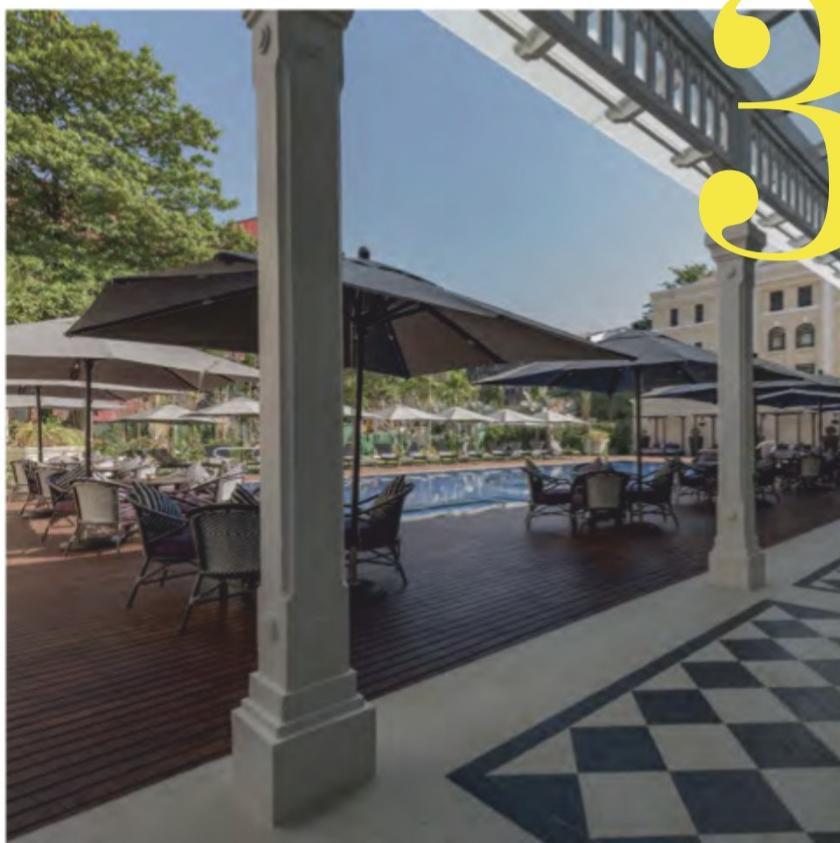


1/ La Mamounia, Morocco

The word ‘oasis’ gets thrown around a lot, but for Morocco’s **La Mamounia** it’s completely justified. Situated in the heart of Morocco’s buzzing centre, Marrakech, the palace-turned-hotel feels blissfully tranquil. Walled manicured gardens dotted with ancient olive trees surround La Mamounia, making guests feel as if they’ve entered a destination within a destination. And there’s oh-so much to see and experience within its ochre-hued walls.

Four acclaimed restaurants, a traditional Moroccan spa, a palm-shaded pool and private *riads* are hedonistic delights worth discovering here, but the hotel’s Arabic-Andalusian architecture alone is enough to – quite literally – stop you in your tracks. A tribute to the skills of Morocco’s craftsmen and women, La Mamounia is adorned with intricate tiled mosaics and *gebs* (carved plaster) – a reminder of its regal past. No wonder Churchill told Roosevelt in 1943 that it was “one of the most beautiful places in the world”.

Couples will love: La Mamounia is located just moments from Morocco’s most spectacular sights, including the Marrakech medina and Jemaa el Fna square. Guests can easily venture out or enjoy one of the hotel’s exclusive Marrakech day-trips to experience it all for themselves.



2/ Hôtel de Crillon, France

The hotel *de jour* for generations of royalty (Marie Antoinette even took music lessons here), presidents, prime ministers and film stars, Paris’s **Hôtel de Crillon** has won over luxury-lovers once again after emerging from a multimillion-dollar face-lift in 2017. In true Parisian style, the hotel’s authentic character remains, just refreshed.

Now home to fashionable rooms and suites (some designed by the late Chanel creative director Karl Lagerfeld), Hôtel de Crillon is an icon reborn. With postcard-ready views of the Eiffel Tower, it’s all class – expect Michelin-star cuisine (*what else?*), private butler service, a Rosewood spa, a gold-tiled subterranean pool and all the romance of a Parisian escape. And with a location that’s hard to beat (the hotel is just around the corner from the Élysée Palace, the Champs-Élysées and the Tuileries Garden), Hôtel de Crillon isn’t going anywhere any time soon.

Couples will love: Can’t fathom leaving home without your fur-baby? Pets are welcome at the hotel, with a team of butlers on hand to look after furry friends. Getting away, just the two of you? Lounging around in your own gilded hideaway is enough to make you feel like French royalty... pre-revolution, of course.



3

The Strand Yangon, Myanmar

Revived after years of turmoil, Myanmar is hot on the travel radar, enticing intrepid travellers from around the world to discover its rugged landscapes. Perfect for those who want to mix luxury and excitement while in this magnificent destination, **The Strand Yangon** promises an extraordinary experience, right on the banks of the Yangon River.

Built in 1901, the luxury hotel is a reminder of Myanmar’s British colonial heritage. But while it’s thoughtfully decorated with chandeliers, ceiling fans and authentic period furnishings, it’s certainly not stuck in the past. Advanced in-room technologies, highly personalised service and quality furnishings make The Strand Yangon a modern mainstay. Gourmands will love the hotel’s dining options and mood-lit bar (don’t miss clinking glasses at **Sarkies Bar**, just as Noel Coward, Rudyard Kipling and Orson Welles once did), while those seeking rejuvenation will be impressed by the onsite spa’s treatment menu. Whatever you’re into, though, you’re sure to find plenty of enchantment here.

Couples will love: The Strand Yangon boasts its own ship, which runs two to four-day itineraries along the winding Irrawaddy River, from Bagan to Mandalay. With a design that recalls old Hollywood, the luxury vessel makes cruising glamorous with gourmet cuisine and spacious cabins, each with generous balconies.



5/ The Beverly Hills Hotel, USA

Few addresses are as closely linked with Old Hollywood as Dorchester Collection's **The Beverly Hills Hotel** – even its grand entrance features a red carpet. Taking up 12 landscaped acres on Sunset Boulevard, the 'Pink Palace' has hosted its fair share of famous faces. John Lennon and Yoko Ono held a bed-in in one of the bungalows, Marilyn Monroe was a frequent guest, and Sidney Poitier celebrated his 1964 Oscar win by dancing barefoot in the lobby. If these banana palm-printed walls could talk...

Tinsel Town's finest had good reason for favouring The Beverly Hills Hotel. With sumptuous private hideaways, sensational dining, an outstanding spa, one of the world's most famous pools and *just* the right amount of nostalgia, it's one for the bucket list.

Couples will love: A stay here really wouldn't be complete without enjoying dinner at **The Polo Lounge**'s bougainvillea-fringed patio. Undeniably pretty, it's where you just might casually spot some of Hollywood's brightest stars.

4/ Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund, China

A reminder of Shanghai's fabled history, the **Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund** is as sophisticated as hotels get, fusing timeless elegance with modern convenience (its central location makes a stay totally hassle-free). But it's the unexpected touches – such as complimentary homemade in-room sweets and digitally controlled drapes – that will have guests returning time and again.

Much like the city's new and old districts, the hotel is split into two buildings – a stylish new tower and a century-old heritage tower. A stay in either is a totally lavish experience (book one of the Heritage Tower's 20 suites to live it up like the crown princes of Luxembourg and Belgium), with exquisite late-Victorian-style architecture featuring throughout. Don't spend your whole stay here, though, lounging around in luxury. There's a vibrant city just outside waiting for you to explore, plus a renowned spa, indoor pool and six dining options to enjoy. And we highly recommend that you do.

Couples will love: If you love to indulge in a little retail therapy, you'll be in your element at Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund. A reflection of the city's cosmopolitan lifestyle, the hotel offers its own personal shopping assistant service for guests. And with China's top shopping strip, Nanjing Road, just around the corner, there's plenty of opportunity to pick up a souvenir.



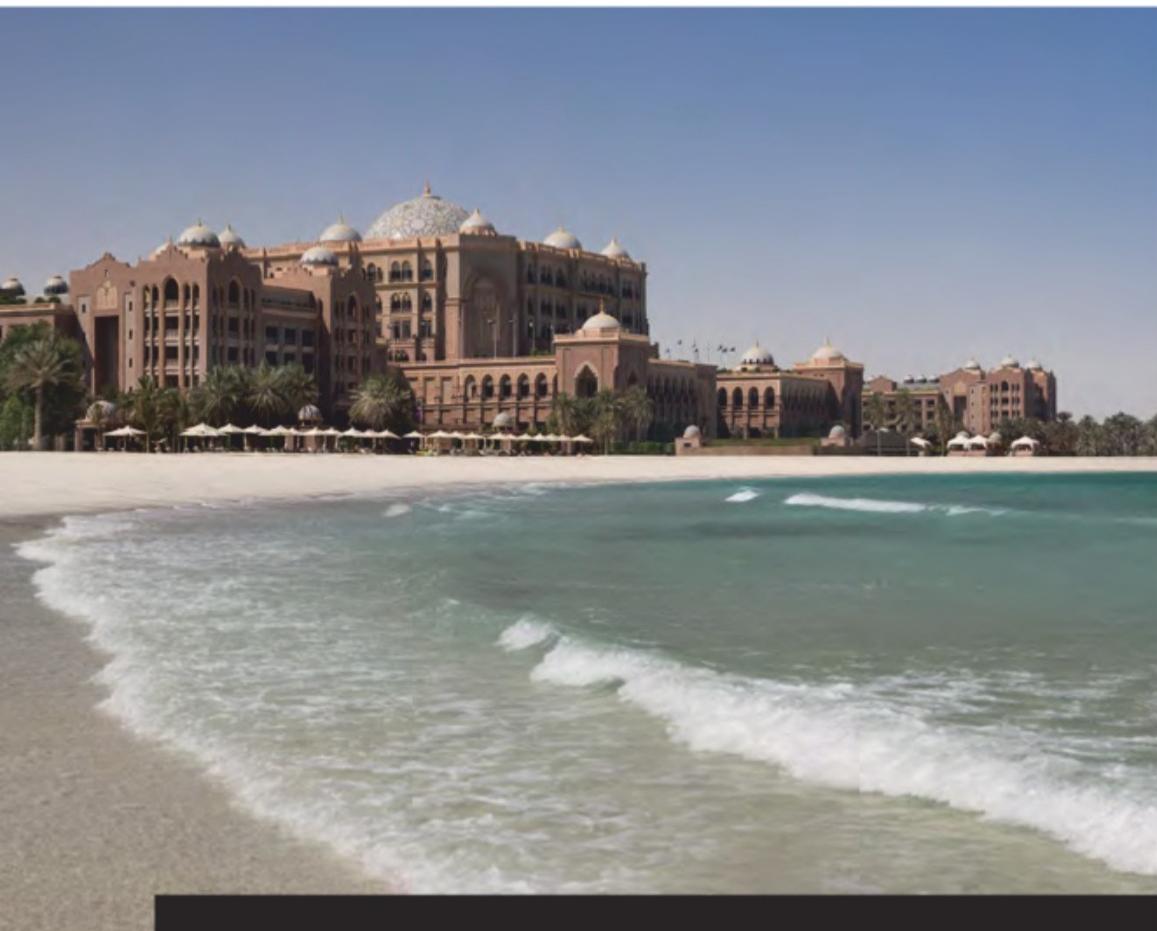
6

Ritz Paris, France

This hotel isn't putting on anything – the **Ritz Paris** is all elegance. Decked out with plush patterned carpets, canopied beds, rococo desks, oil paintings and the occasional gold swan tap, it's exactly what you picture when you think 'Paris in its heyday'. So, it's no surprise that Coco Chanel called the Ritz her home for more than 30 years, or that luminaries such as Marcel Proust, F Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway were regulars.

An icon in a city of icons, the Ritz was Paris's most innovative hotel when it opened in 1898 (it was the first to offer lifts, electricity and private bathrooms) and standards certainly haven't slipped. Like Hôtel de Crillon, it has been revitalised after extensive updates, adding eyebrow-raising features like a retractable glass roof above an outdoor dining area and the world's first – and only – **Chanel** spa.

Couples will love: Gourmands, you're in the right place. Step inside the hotel's kitchens and master the art of French cuisine (or attempt to) with a workshop at the Ritz's cooking school. Open to guests, **École Ritz Escoffier** will brush up your skills on everything from classic French fare to pastry and cocktail-making. *C'est magnifique!* ➔



7/ Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, UAE

In a city of opulence, **Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi** stands out from the crowd. Calling the Royal Palace its neighbour, the seven-star hotel is extravagance at its best. From its walls to the staff's tailcoats and even the cafe's cappuccinos, nearly *everything* here is gilded. Serious about your luxury? You can also indulge in a 24-carat gold facial. Why not?

There are simple pleasures to be found here too, such as sunbathing on Emirates Palace's pristine private beach and taking in sigh-inducing views of the vast gardens. Of course, touches like attentive butlers, whirlpool baths and iPad control stations don't hurt.

Couples will love: As enchanting as the hotel's interiors are, the beach is the place to be. Watch the world pass by from your own canopied beach cabana. Or, experience a taste of traditional Arabian hospitality by sipping tea in a Bedouin tent before navigating the coastline on the back of a camel.



8/ The Plaza Hotel, USA

The Plaza: two words that instantly evoke a sense of tasteful luxury and undeniable prestige. Almost countless cultural icons have visited (including Elizabeth Taylor and the Kennedys), and some of history's most notable moments happened inside its walls, including possibly the best party ever, Truman Capote's infamous Black and White Ball.

The Plaza Hotel – also known as the castle on Central Park South – is worthy of the hype. The rooms and suites are lavish; the **Guerlain Spa** hard to resist. And the dining? Enough to make you feel like an A-lister couple escaping the paparazzi... even if just for a night.

Couples will love: You're in New York City – in fact, you're in one of the city's most prestigious locations. Situated on Fifth Avenue, right across the road from Central Park, The Plaza makes discovering the 'city that never sleeps' almost too easy. If you can tear yourselves away from the luxurious rooms and restaurants, get out and see it all for yourselves after enjoying a Manhattan tradition: afternoon tea at the hotel's **Palm Court**.

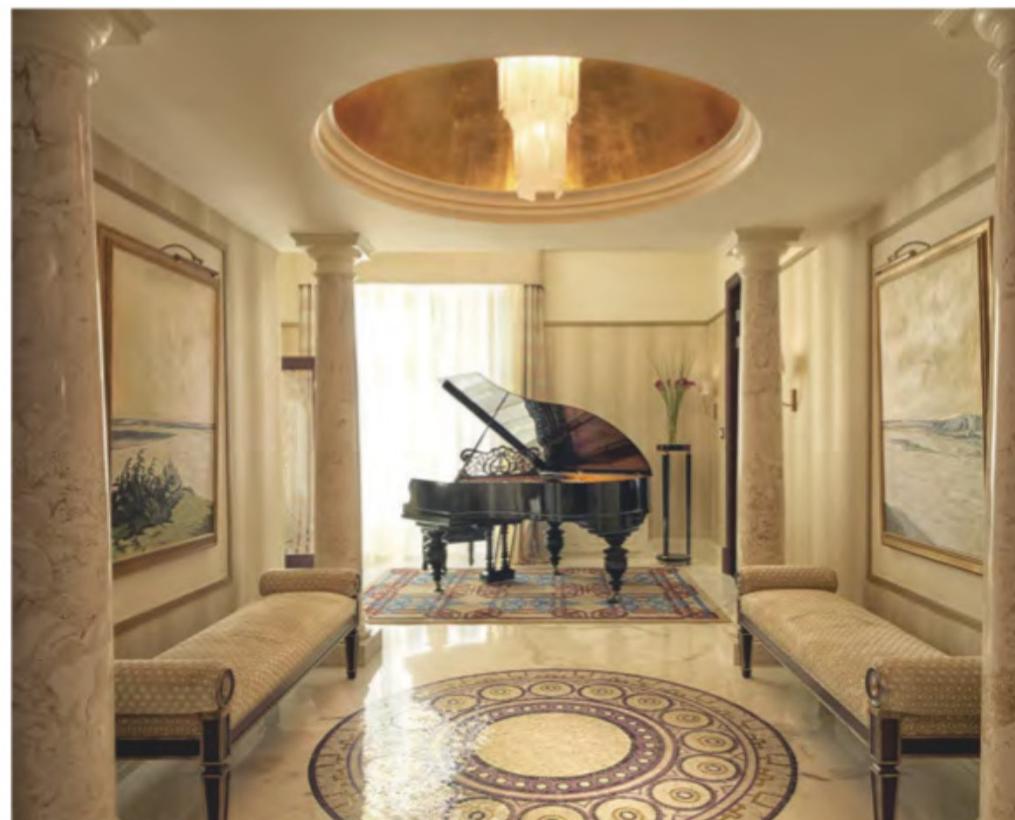
9

Belmond Grand Hotel Europe, Russia

Excellent food, wine, theatre, art, music – there's a lot to be said about enjoying the finer things in life. A place where all this comes together, St Petersburg's **Belmond Grand Hotel Europe**, really is the stuff of legends.

Standing among some of Russia's grandest monuments on the Nevsky Prospekt, this lavish hotel has seen it all. Enduring Russia's illustrious history from rise and fall (and rise again), it's where Tchaikovsky honeymooned, where Dostoevsky found inspiration for *Crime and Punishment*, and where Rasputin wined, dined and charmed St Petersburg's elite. Paying homage to its past, the hotel features a collection of individually themed historic suites, each with jaw-droppingly high ceilings, restored antiques and Italian marble bathrooms. Unsurprisingly, the Romanovs loved it here.

Couples will love: The Belmond Grand Hotel's **L'Europe** restaurant is almost as famous as the hotel itself, with its dazzling stained glass windows and glittering guest list. The longest continually running restaurant in Russia, it's hosted names like Queen Elizabeth II, Jimmy Carter and Elton John. Still a hub for St Petersburg's social scene, the restaurant offers not-to-be-missed Tchaikovsky Nights on a Friday evening, where couples can dine by candlelit and watch a live ballet performance – so romantic.





10/ ICEHOTEL Sweden

Not all iconic hotels boast a city-central location or are steeped in history. In fact, this unique ‘seasonal’ offering is deconstructed and reconstructed each year, and calls a tiny Swedish village home. Oh, this is no normal hotel.

An architectural wonder built from the ice of Sweden’s Torne River, **ICEHOTEL Sweden** has earned its reputation as one of the world’s most fascinating places to stay since first ‘opening’ in 1990. Each room in this whimsical hideaway is carved out of ice by artists from around the world, making the hotel itself one big creative exhibition. The climate may be cool here, but the hospitality is warm, with an aptly named **ICEBAR** and an award-winning restaurant completing the winter wonderland idyll.

Couples will love: You can (and should) live out your Arctic-adventure dreams here, with an array of unbelievable experiences on offer at ICEHOTEL. Dog-sledding through the wilderness, spotting the elusive Northern Lights, feeding reindeer and enjoying exclusive, romantic dinners in the woodlands – they’re all pinch-me-now moments that will have you feeling like an overexcited kid again.

Longitude 131°, Australia

From one extreme to the other. Sprawling across the scarlet-sand desert of the Northern Territory’s Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, **Longitude 131°** seems to effortlessly blend into its dramatic surroundings. And that’s exactly how it should be here, with the captivating Uluru and untouched horizon demanding your attention from right outside your window.

Sixteen tented pavilions make up Longitude 131°, each with simple (but undeniably luxurious) custom furnishings, Indigenous artworks and expansive decks that overlook the spellbinding monolith. Indulgent treatments using native Australian ingredients at the onsite spa help guests connect with their surroundings, while the retreat’s **Table 131°** showcases the best in modern outback cuisine. If this is going bush, we’d never want to go back.

Couples will love: Guided tours to the Kantju and Walpa Gorges with Longitude 131° are truly unforgettable, but if you do one thing, make it seeing Bruce Munro’s majestic **Field of Light** before it finishes in 2020. Comprised of 50,000 tiny lights that carpet the landscape in glowing colour, the installation is like nothing else you’ll ever witness.



11



12/ The Peninsula Hong Kong, Hong Kong

There’s a reason why this superb hotel is referred to as the ‘Grand Dame of the Far East’. Setting the standard for east-meets-west hospitality for the last 90-odd years, **The Peninsula Hong Kong** is the place to go to live out your most glamorous travel fantasies. You know, the one where you arrive by helicopter (yes, there’s a helipad on the rooftop and a chopper available for transfers and joyrides).

Don’t be fooled by the gloved pageboys or the fleet of Rolls Royces in the forecourt, though – The Peninsula certainly doesn’t feel aged. Combining the appeal of yesteryear with the vibrancy of the present, the hotel is right in the middle of Hong Kong’s metropolitan scene. Towering over the Tsim Sha Tsui shopping and nightlife district, it’s only a short stroll or a ferry ride across the harbour from Hong Kong’s high-end haunts and world-class museums.

Couples will love: Just a stone’s throw from Hong Kong’s Victoria Harbour, The Peninsula offers a special Symphony of Lights Cruise aboard its own luxury yacht (of course!). Settle in for a leisurely two-hour journey and enjoy cocktails and canapés before watching the skyline come alive with the famous Symphony of Lights multimedia show. →

13

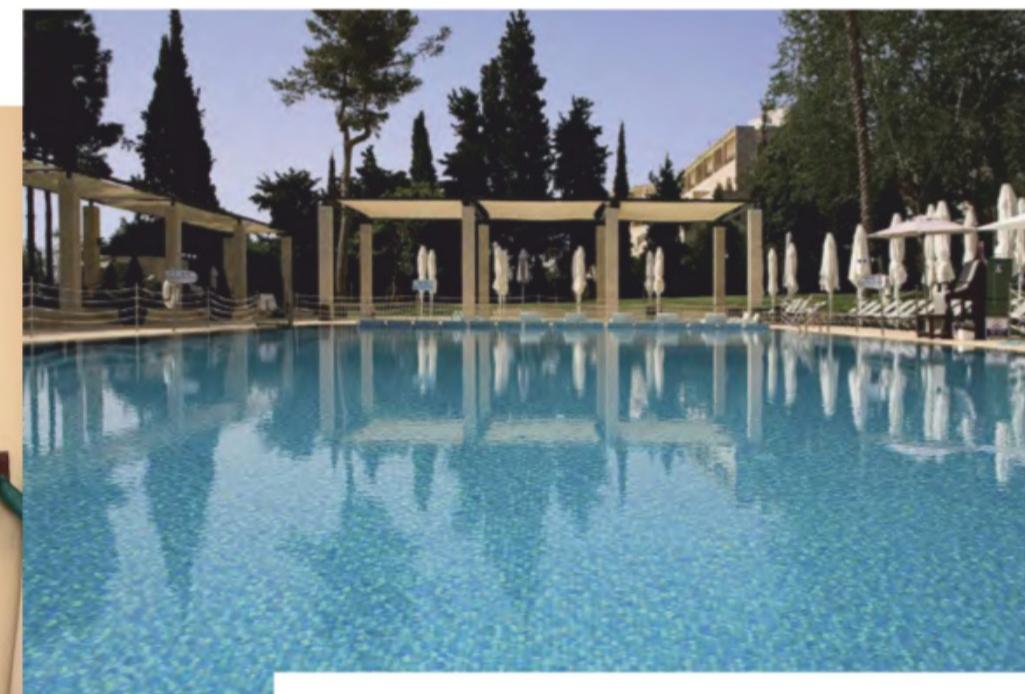
The Shelbourne Hotel, Ireland

You'll feel as if you've been blessed with the luck of the Irish when you call the stately **Shelbourne Hotel** your home-away-from-home.

Situated near leafy St Stephens Green and just moments from some of the city's most remarkable attractions, the historic spa hotel offers a sumptuous sanctuary in the heart of Dublin.

All of life's luxuries are right at your fingertips here, from simple delights like super-plush bedding and *very* generous baths to an exceptional full-service spa and award-winning restaurants. Well, one has to eat. What makes it such a prestigious address, though? Built in 1824, The Shelbourne is known for its romantic interiors and warm Irish hospitality. Ain't it grand?

Couples will love: History buffs will be dazzled by this illustrious hotel's past. The Irish constitution was drafted at The Shelbourne in 1922 (one of the two original copies can still be found in the Constitution Suite), and it's mere steps from landmarks such as Dáil Éireann, Trinity College and the National Gallery, Museum and Library.



14/ The Victoria Falls Hotel, Zimbabwe

If you're looking to mix a cosmopolitan escape with an unforgettable African adventure, Zimbabwe's **Victoria Falls Hotel** doesn't disappoint. Affording views of the magical Victoria Falls that will, quite literally, render you speechless, the Edwardian-style hotel *really* is like nowhere else on earth.

Originally built in the early 1900s to provide accommodation for workers on the Cape-to-Cairo railway, the historic retreat is where you can still partake in traditions like golf and high tea. It's not all G&Ts on the verandah here, though. Thrill-seekers, listen up: there's everything from walks with lions and white-water rafting on the gorges to bungee jumping over the Falls on offer.

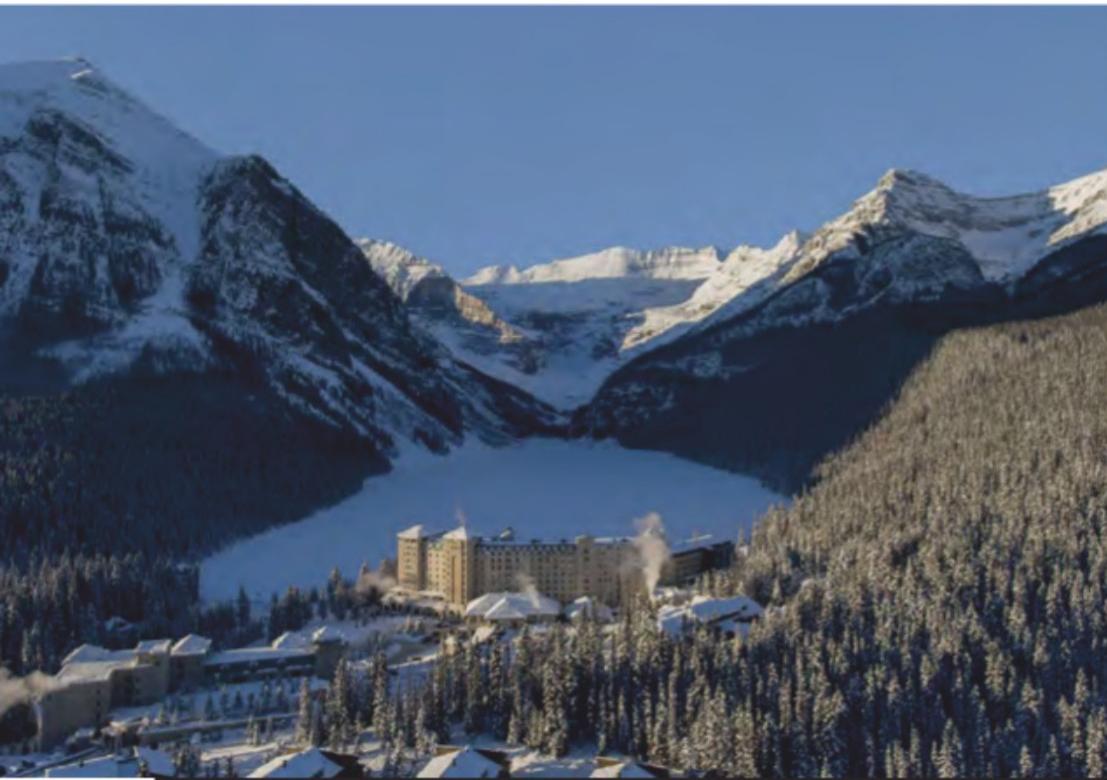
Couples will love: However you do it, seeing the Victoria Falls is an unmissable experience while staying at The Victoria Falls Hotel. After all, it *is* one of the world's Seven Natural Wonders. Enjoy a dreamy sunset cruise, zipline over its gorges or marvel at its beauty on a 'Flight of the Angels' helicopter ride. Want to keep things simple? Follow the path that winds from the hotel, passing deep gorges and the famous Victoria Falls Bridge along the way.

15/ The King David, Israel

The hotel of choice for visiting world leaders and royalty (53 kings have walked its red carpet), Israel's **King David Hotel** in Jerusalem seems like a fantasy brought to life. Clad in pink limestone from local quarries and fringed by soaring pines, it brings together an array of ancient cultural influences – Assyrian, Hittite, Phoenician and Muslim – that all have one thing in common: unashamed opulence. The result? A uniquely luxurious setting in one of the world's most spellbinding destinations.

Adding to the list of lavish touches is the city's largest pool (don't miss taking a dip in its expanse), plus views of Jerusalem's Old City walls from every suite – that's a standard we could get used to.

Couples will love: Exploring the fabled Old City and its four distinct quarters – Armenian, Muslim, Jewish and Christian – is a must-do, with The King David Hotel just a short stroll away. Here, tick off famous sights including the Western Wall, the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Sepulcher for a soul-enriching sojourn.



16/ Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, Canada

Few hotels are as instantly recognisable as the **Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise** – and for good reason. Set right on the shoreline of the glistening Lake Louise and surrounded by the snow-capped Canadian Rockies in Alberta's Banff National Park, this legendary retreat takes alpine romance to a whole other level.

A haven for adventure seekers, the Fairmont offers an almost endless list of amazing experiences that change with the seasons. In the warmer months, there's canoeing, horseback riding, hiking and white-water rafting (to name a few) to get your heart racing. But it's in winter when the hotel *really* puts on a show – skate on the frozen lake, dogsled with huskies, hit the ski slopes or cuddle up together on a sleigh ride. We'd be happy just sipping mulled wine at the aptly named **Ice Bar** (an outdoor bar with a view) or feasting on fresh local produce at one of the hotel's many dining options.

Couples will love: Built more than 100 years ago with outdoor enthusiasts in mind, the Fairmont is a massive alpine playground. Avid skiers will find world-class slopes and cross-country tracks here. Keen to really spoil yourselves? View the vast snowfields and powder-covered mountains from above on a private helicopter flight, complete with sparkling wine and dessert.



18/ Taj Lake Palace, India

Seemingly floating above Udaipur's majestic Lake Pichola, the **Taj Lake Palace** is pure romance.

Built by the young Maharana Jagat Singh II in 1746 after being caught frolicking at moonlight picnics with ladies of the private chambers of the court, this former pleasure palace is still an oasis for luxury-loving couples.

If the digs here look familiar, chances are you've seen them in the 1983 James Bond film *Octopussy* – it seems only fitting for one of fiction's most notorious romancers to have stayed here.

Creating a truly ethereal atmosphere, the marble-clad palace's original fountains and heritage architectural features make visitors feel like guests of royalty (if not royalty themselves). Inside, each of the hotel's splendid rooms and suites reveals views of Udaipur's City Palace, Aravalli Hills, Machla Magra Hills and Jag Mandir. Of course, the VIP treatment doesn't stop there, with an array of fine dining options and a floating spa available for your enjoyment. Life's tough.

Couples will love: The hotel's **Jiva Spa** celebrates India's renowned wellness traditions with an array of time-tested therapies. Unwind with indulgent treatments such as *champi* (a centuries-old head massage) and *pada mardana* (a traditional Indian foot massage).



17

Raffles Singapore, Singapore

It's been on the lips of travel insiders for a while now, after closing its doors for extensive renovations back in 2017. Now, the famous **Raffles Singapore** is back, promising travellers the quintessential 'Raffles experience', but refreshed – we're talking swish suites and unrivalled service.

The same colonial charms (think lofty ceilings, polished teakwood floors and grand verandahs overlooking verdant gardens) remain, while restored private retreats with state-of-the-art technology and redesigned amenities will attract a new generation of visitors. Five restaurants, six bars (including the inimitable **Long Bar**) and a new spa make up the fresh list of reasons to book a stay.

Couples will love: You really can't come to Raffles Singapore without pulling up a chair at the Long Bar's sleek counter and ordering a Singapore Sling – this is where the cocktail was invented, after all. For a memorable travel experience, join one of the bar's expert mixologists and learn how to create the classic tipple at home. Cheers to you two!



20

Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Italy

If you asked us to name the world's prettiest destination, Italy's Lake Como would be a fierce contender. Easily the loveliest spot on the lake, the **Grand Hotel Tremezzo** on the western shore looks out at a panorama of dazzling waters framed by mountains. A 20-acre garden blossoming with azaleas, geraniums, rhododendrons and hydrangeas complete the idyllic scene, giving the art nouveau villa-turned-hotel a fairytale-like beauty. Grete Garbo nailed it when she labelled it "that happy, sunny place" in the classic 1932 film *Grand Hotel*.

There's a real sense of *familia* at the Grand Hotel Tremezzo. Owned and run by a local family for the past four decades, the boutique hotel is beloved for its cheerful decor, made-with-love Italian fare and personal service. And who wouldn't want to be part of this family, with features like a private lakeside beach and an ESPA spa here for you to savour.

Couples will love: Channel your inner George and Amal when you hop from one gorgeous lakeside spot to another with help from Grand Hotel Tremezzo's water limousine service. Mandatory stops include Bellagio's high-end boutiques and the ancient town of Varenna. 

19/ Claridge's, UK

"Not that I intend to die, but when I do, I don't want to go to heaven – I want to go to Claridge's." It's hard not to agree with Spencer Tracy on this point. With a dedication to excellence (the hotel's staff have been known to fly in a guest's favourite cookies from New York and hand-polish each piece of fruit in every suite), **Claridge's** is a London institution.

Beautifully styled in glamorous art deco splendour, Claridge's in the centre of lively Mayfair takes its luxury seriously. Case in point? Guests can be whisked around the mega-city in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce before dining at the hotel's new restaurant **Davies & Brook** and settling into their courtyard-view guest room. Yes, heaven is a place on earth.

Couples will love: Conveniently located near London's West End, Claridge's will organise tickets to the hottest musicals, comedies, plays, operas and ballets at its Theatre Desk. Be sure to fit in time for a classic Champagne afternoon tea first.



LOVE IS ALL AROUND

In some of the most romantic settings, you'll find Centara.
Discover tropical islands, beaches and waters and refresh your spirit at
Centara resorts across Thailand, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Stay in your choice of luxurious accommodation — beachfront suites
with private pools, overwater villas, spacious guest rooms, and more.

Explore the cuisines of Asia and the world in the most memorable settings,
from a candlelit dinner on the beach to a private seaside picnic.

Relax in our award-winning SPA Cenvaree, as a rejuvenating treatment-for-two
pampers you with soothing touches and delightful scents.

Experience our Thai-style service that will fill you
with smiles and warmth you won't forget.

Plan your romantic getaway and enjoy our best price
guarantee at centarahotelsresorts.com/romantic



THAILAND

MALDIVES

OMAN

QATAR

SRI LANKA

VIETNAM

CENTARA The1

MEMBERS GET MORE

CentaraThe1 members
receive **10%** off any online rate,
plus many more privileges.

CENTARA
GRAND
HOTELS & RESORTS
Centara
BOUTIQUE COLLECTION

CENTARA
HOTELS & RESORTS
centra
by CENTARA

CENTARA
RESIDENCES & SUITES
COSI



pink city pleasure

India-bound lovers of the exotic, the luxurious and the indulgent will find their own palace awaits at Fairmont Jaipur, as **Natalie Bannister** discovers

As the gateway to the desert state of Rajasthan in India, Jaipur has a history as rich and wondrous as its awe-inspiring palaces, forts and architecture. Home to many regal forms of accommodation, from old *havelis* (traditional residences) to grand palace hotels, **Fairmont Jaipur** stands apart from the Pink City offerings with its unique combination of sophistication and refined glamour – an ode to a bygone Mughal dynasty and the royal Rajputs, with all the style and comfort of the modern era.

Guests are treated like royalty from the moment they arrive at Fairmont Jaipur. Stepping out from our private car we are greeted by a regally attired gatekeeper, his palms pressed together and decadently styled Rajput moustache in perfect form, as colourfully dressed men beat huge drums and a shower of rose petals fall from the rooftops above us. Ushered into a tranquil courtyard, we're led past a tabla player, the deep and high-pitched *knock-knock* of his drums announcing our arrival. It's all *very* special, but these touches of traditional hospitality, we discover, are a signature of Fairmont Jaipur – the hotel's many beautiful nooks provide the stage for Rajasthani folk dancers, puppeteers and musicians throughout the day and night.



(Top) Guests are showered with rose petals as part of the hotel's lavish signature greeting. (Above) The Fairmont Jaipur, which opened in 2012, is designed to make guests feel like royalty. The opulent palace-like building and manicured grounds set the scene. (Opposite page, from top) Fairmont Jaipur's spa is a haven of indulgence; Rooms are lavishly decorated in traditional Rajasthani style and perfectly frame the Aravalli Range.

Room with a view

Built in the tradition of the region's grand Mughal palaces, Fairmont Jaipur showcases the artistic heritage of Rajasthan – from the 300-year-old carved doors salvaged from Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur, to the 500-odd pillars and architectural details throughout the property, all finished by some of India's finest artisans.

Naturally, all 245 rooms and suites are elegantly appointed with a perfect blend of traditional Rajasthani decor and modern amenities, and many (including ours) boast floor-to-ceiling windows with stunning views out over the rugged Aravalli Range. Our room is artfully decorated and expansive, featuring heavy timber doors, a private foyer, vaulted ceiling, and the most divine four-poster bed topped with plush bed linens, as well as a jaw-droppingly beautiful bathroom complete with a hammam-style bathtub (the biggest we've seen at any hotel in Jaipur). It's comfortably opulent, and total bliss.



All-star spa

I'm starting to feel a little like a *maharani* (queen) myself, so I book into the hotel's spa for one of their unique Zodiac experiences. My therapist tailors the massage to nurture and renew my star sign's primary chakra points. She explains that each of the star signs has a corresponding energy centre, and as a cancerian, mine is *Ajna*, the third-eye chakra. Allowing the therapist to work, I relax into a few hours of pampering, emerging lighter and more clear in mind and body, refreshed from the sensory fatigue that can come from travelling through the beautiful chaos of India.

A royal feast

Unsurprisingly, dining is a decadent experience at Fairmont Jaipur, and a meal at **Zarin**, one of the hotel's restaurants where the focus is on Indo-Persian fusion cuisine, is not to be missed.

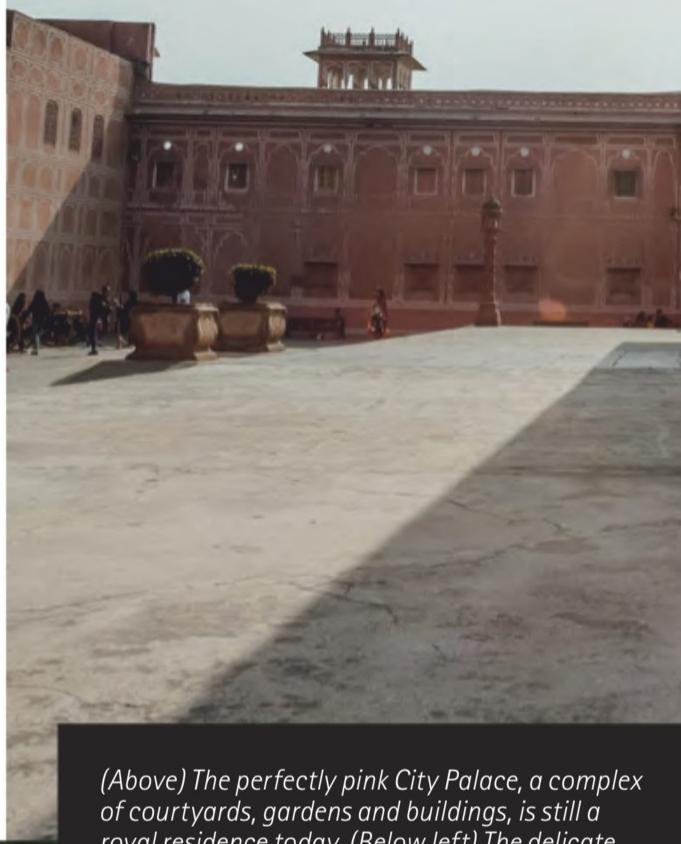
We soak our hands in scented water strewn with rose petals, ahead of what turns out to be one of the most memorable meals of our entire



“Built in the tradition of the region's grand Mughal palaces, Fairmont Jaipur showcases the artistic heritage of Rajasthan”

India trip – a traditional Rajasthani *thali* (sampling plate) of no less than 16 dishes, served in tiny brass bowls on a giant round platter, as well as an array of Indian breads and desserts. It's mouthwatering, and impossible to finish – but therein lies the indulgence.

Still full when we wake for breakfast the next morning, the feast nevertheless continues at **Zoya**, the hotel's fabulous all-day dining restaurant, where we enjoy an array of Western classics and Indian delights such as *masala dosa* (a little like a spicy crepe), all cooked fresh at live chef stations, washed down with delicious *masala chai* (Indian spiced tea). The restaurant has a court-style dining area with a luxe blue-and-white tented ceiling and rich silver seating, but we prefer to dine outside on the terrace next to the lily pond, soaking up the peace and tranquillity of a crisp winter's morning ahead of a busy day of sightseeing in and around Jaipur. →



(Above) The perfectly pink City Palace, a complex of courtyards, gardens and buildings, is still a royal residence today. (Below left) The delicate green of the ornate Leheriya Gate celebrates spring. (Below right) Relax in the stylish courtyard of Baradari restaurant.



Venturing out

We have arranged our own private chauffeured car through Fairmont Jaipur, and our driver, Sudhir, is a wealth of knowledge and tips for our itinerary as we make our way to the incredible 16th-century Amer (Amber) Fort. The largest of Jaipur's three forts overlooking the city, Amer makes for a charming few hours of exploring, wandering the halls, hidden passageways and ornate interior chambers, before descending back down to the Old City to see architectural marvels like the Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) and the City Palace with its collection of grand buildings, courtyards and a museum.

There are photo opportunities aplenty at the City Palace, and we delight in seeing the often Instagrammed inner courtyard called Pritam Niwas Chowk, with its four incredibly intricate doorways – the Peacock Gate, Lotus Gate, Rose Gate and Leheriya (Waves) Gate – each unique in its design and decoration.

The swanky **Baradari** restaurant, found through a doorway in the palace's main courtyard, provides a perfect retreat for a relaxed lunch and a refreshing cocktail to end the afternoon in style – a reminder of Jaipur's unique allure as a city where old and new, traditional and modern, chaotic and charming combine in spectacular fashion.

A romantic haven

Nothing short of stunning inside and out, Fairmont Jaipur is all about grand gestures and old-fashioned romance. A convenient short drive out of the city centre, it provides a peaceful escape from the bustling streets of Jaipur – close enough to offer easy access to all the Pink City's pleasures, yet just far enough away to really rest and recharge after a busy day of sightseeing and shopping.

Fairmont Jaipur is also one of Rajasthan's premier wedding destinations, with an array of luxurious settings including the lush central 'charbagh', with its Persian-style garden layout, and the majestic Grand Ballroom, where newlyweds will feel like a king and queen.

FIND OUT MORE: fairmont.com/jaipur



DREAM WEDDINGS + DREAMY HONEYMOONS

On a secluded cove, against a canvas of sand and sea, couples exchange vows at a breathtaking resort nestled on a 40-acre seaside haven. Boasting a secluded 500-metre pristine beach and lush tropical greenery, Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort offers dream weddings and romantic honeymoons in a place of untouched tranquility on the island's south western coast.

Begin your lifelong journey together by exchanging vows aboard the 'BORN FREE', the Resort's private yacht.

At Le Méridien, we believe inspiration exists at every turn. From exploring new locales with your beloved to sharing an adventure with your guests, Le Méridien wedding offers limitless possibilities for discovery and delight.

Le MERIDIEN

N 7° 51' E 98° 16'
DESTINATION UNLOCKED

LE MERIDIEN PHUKET BEACH RESORT
29 SOI KARON NUI, KARON, MUANG PHUKET 83100, THAILAND
T +66 76 370 100 F +66 76 341 583



E R A T A P
beach resort
efate island · vanuatu



Experience Eratap – Experience Vanuatu



+61 433 235 982

+ (678) 35560

res@eratap.com

www.eratap.com





SUBTLE OPULENCE. ABSOLUTE ROMANCE.

Chapung Sebali in Ubud is the destination for your honeymoon, special anniversary celebration, or place to rekindle the romance in your relationship. Escape or hide, experience that feeling of anticipation, love and emotion.

A romantic dinner under the stars on the upper deck of Jungle Fish Restaurant surrounded by the lush forest views, or a floating breakfast in your private villa pool.

For your wellness, experience the metamorphic Chapung Spa for the most suitable treatment for you. Or take a leisurely walk through Ubud's renowned paddy fields, the beginning of your life journey together.

Chapung Sebali suites are ideal for couples with an eclectic taste. And for utmost privacy and seclusion, our villas with a swimming pool will be your love sanctuary.

Experience a unique romantic fusion of the modern and traditional.



www.chapung.com



Azul Beach Club

The lovers' guide to *Bali*

From the hedonistic to the heavenly, Bali offers the perfect blend of indulgence, adventure and relaxation – an island escape beckoning you to check in and chill out, writes **Natalie Bannister**



Ulu Cliffhouse



The tantalising mix of sun-drenched beaches, eco escapes, blazing sunsets, barefoot luxury, sophisticated fashion, world-class dining, and one of the most beautiful cultures in the world lures me back to Bali at least a few times each year – and with each return, I swear, this island just keeps on getting better. Whether it's the restaurants, the resorts or the escapism you're after, no matter your style, budget or lifestyle, Bali has a 'choose your own adventure' exotic charm. Every region of this tiny but mighty island offers a melting pot of experiences that are ever-changing, and always impressive. Lovers, consider this your ultimate guide.





A COSMOPOLITAN PLAYGROUND Seminyak

Thanks to an abundance of hip hangouts, chic boutiques, cool bars, beach clubs, swanky accommodation options and some of the island's best restaurants, Seminyak manages to retain its charm as one of Bali's best places to stay and play – for at least a few days of shopping, sipping and savouring. Say yes to Seminyak, and you're guaranteed a good time.

SAVOUR

Seminyak is a fine-dining hub, and one of the island's original establishments is **La Lucciola**, which beckons us back with its enchanting setting and modern Mediterranean-style fare. Some of my most memorable (and romantic!) meals have been had right here, at a table under the open-air, soaring thatched-roof pavilion, enjoying delectable dishes served with the cooling breeze from the ocean beyond. La Looch – as it's affectionately known among longtime Bali lovers – really does have that special something – it's classic, unadulterated Bali at its best. inquiries@lalucciolabali.com

Then there are the new kids on the block, like **Bikini**, which is putting a fresh spin on stylish fine dining. From the creators of popular Seminyak cafe **Sisterfields** (sisterfields.com) – our go-to brunch destination before a spot of shopping – and badass burger haunt **BO\$\$ MAN** (bossmabali.com), Bikini is a playfully decadent offering, where inventive food is served up with a sexy twist. ulokhotinbikini.com

Team Seminyak's famous foodie style with some playtime at the hip Australian-led hangout **Motel Mexicola**, where the 1960s Acapulco-

esque decor (think crucifixes, cacti and lurid Cantina style) sets the scene for a modern take on Mexican street food. The vibe is electrifying late in the night when the endless rounds of Bali's best margaritas kick in and the music starts pumping. So much fun! motelmexicolabali.com

EXPERIENCE

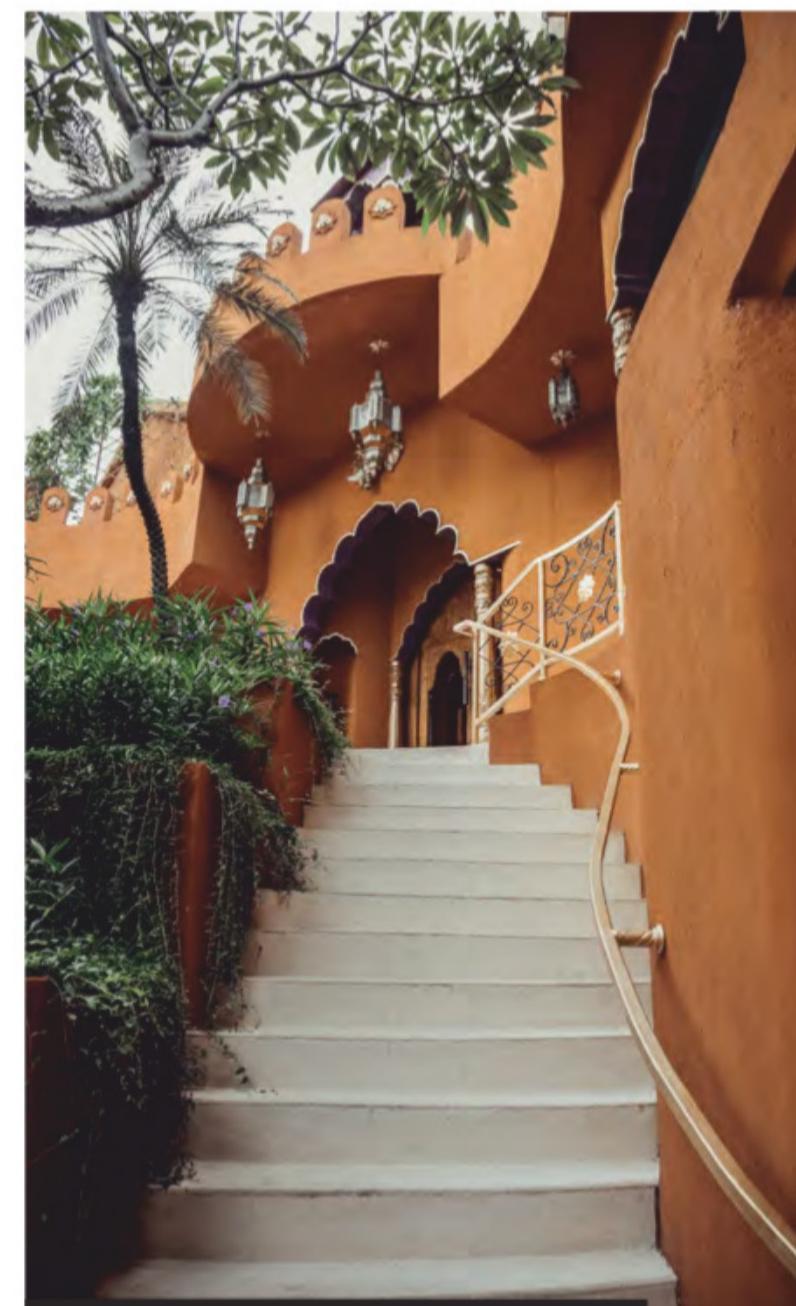
Stroll along the sands of Seminyak Beach and find the perfect perch to take in the magical sunset that blesses this corner of the island every evening. Drink it all in with a sundowner on the deck at **Breeze**, the chic beachfront restaurant and bar at **Samaya Seminyak**. thesamayabali.com

Or, for a sunset washed down with beats and bliss, keep walking to find the so-cool-it-hurts **W Bali**, one of Seminyak's premier resorts, which also boasts one of the island's best – and most contemporary – beachside bar scenes. Say cheers to the end of another day in paradise with a cocktail and a shimmy at **Woobar** before a decadent dinner at **Fire** or **Starfish Bloo**, the resort's stellar restaurants. w-hotels.marriott.com

If sunset can't come fast enough, you're in luck. There's never been a better place to lounge: Seminyak is home to some of Bali's biggest and best beach clubs, where top DJs rocking chilled-out tunes entice travellers to relax, dance, dine and delight all day – and well into the night.

Where to start? There's the original and arguably the best beach club, **Ku De Ta** (kudeta.com) where it pays to arrive early afternoon to nab one of the coveted lounges under the iconic red umbrellas and settle in for some quality people-watching. And, while **Potato Head Beach Club** (ptthead.com) is undeniably Seminyak's slickest beachside venue, with two restaurants, a swanky beachfront bar and an infinity pool overlooking the Indian Ocean, there are a few newcomers to the beach club scene that may tempt you to stay and play a little longer. →

“Stroll along the sands of Seminyak Beach and find the perfect perch to take in the sunset”



(Top) Get in quick to score a prime spot under the red umbrellas at Ku De Ta. (Above) The luxurious Prana Spa is a haven of pampering. Opposite page: (Top) Enjoy a sundowner at Woobar at W Bali. (Bottom) Motel Mexicola is a riot of colour with a party vibe to match.

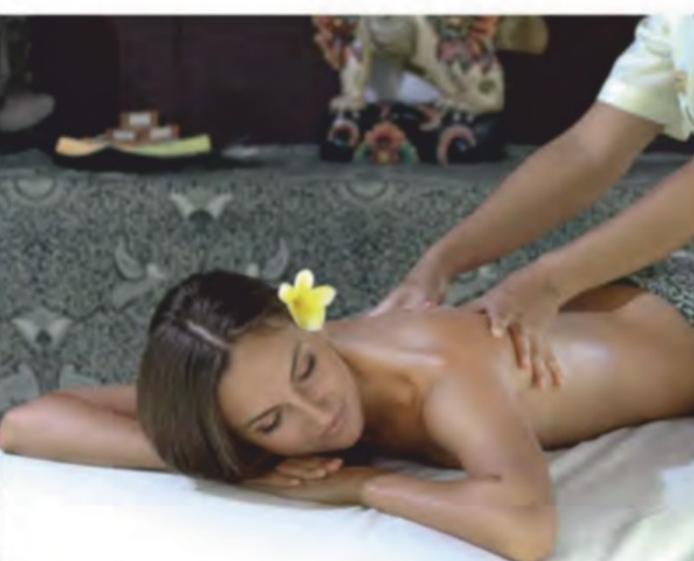
Amadea RESORT & VILLAS

SEMINYAK - BALI



Peaceful Oasis in the Heart of Seminyak

Located on the fashionable "eat street" with its' many boutiques and famous restaurants the resort is perfectly located for those who want to be in the heart of the action and within walking distance to Seminyak Beach



Managed by
PP
PRIME PLAZA
Hotels & Resorts

Amadea Resort & Villas
Kayu Aya 55, Seminyak 80361, Badung, Bali
t. +62 361 847 8155 f. +62 361 847 8157
www.arvs.pphotels.com



(Above) Tropicola burst onto the Bali Beach Club scene last year with a vibrant, retro-chic offering. With two pools, three bars and an open woodfire kitchen, it has your lounging needs covered. A restaurant, rooftop bar and accommodation are in the works for the venue. (Below) New outfit Bikini serves up inventive cocktails, like the Hot Lips Chocolate Kiss, a bright blend of red berry-infused gin, white chocolate liqueur and chipotle-infused white vermouth.



Case in point? The opening of **Tropicola** late last year, just metres up the sand from W Bali. The team behind Motel Mexicola and popular Bondi bar The Bucket List have given the Bali beach club concept a fresh spin, with a retro-styled outfit that's right out of a Slim Aarons photograph. It's the perfect blend of Miami, Acapulco, Palm Springs, Tulum and Playa del Carmen, woven into one ultra cool hangout. tropicola.info

The phrase 'shop 'til you drop' takes on new meaning in this part of the island – so while the late afternoons and evenings are all about hedonistic pleasures, the bright and shiny mornings are all about hopping from one fashion or homewares boutique to the next.

Hit the pavement and explore the shops along Jalan Kayu Aya, also known as **Eat Street**, and you'll find plenty of fashion-friendly gems, including some Australian and international designers who have taken up residence along the popular strip. End your shopping sojourn at **Kim Soo**, set in an old Dutch Colonial-style building, which blends exotic and contemporary homewares to entice even the weariest of shoppers. kimsoo.com

Not relaxed enough from all the shopping, wining and dining? Seminyak has you covered,

with a clutch of luxurious day spas where you can escape the hustle and truly unwind.

Start the day with yoga at the Indian and Middle Eastern-themed **Prana Spa** before entering a world of exotic pampering inside, where the spa's exquisite treatments combine sacred Eastern traditions of health and beauty. pranaspbali.com

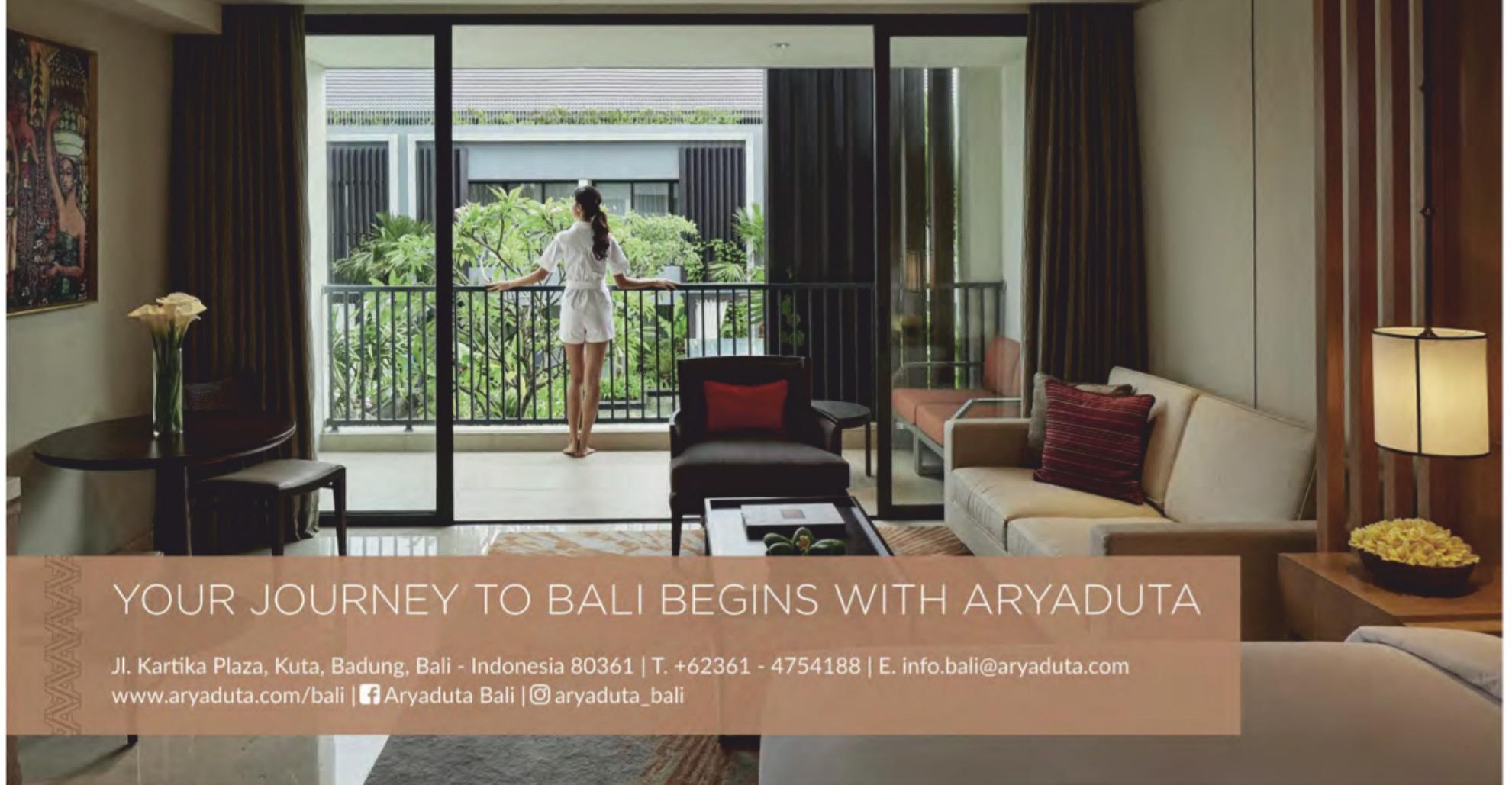
Another classic treat is the beautiful **Bodyworks** spa in Seminyak. It's a bit of a ritual of mine to check in here on our final morning in Seminyak for the Mandi Lulur, a traditional Balinese exfoliation massage treatment using turmeric, sandalwood, cinnamon, ground nuts and rice, finished with a yoghurt wash and a floral bath. It's a truly divine experience. bodyworksbali.com

FALL IN LOVE

Seminyak combines the best of modern Bali – fashion, style, sophistication, luxury and relaxation. Yes, it's crowded on the streets and the traffic is busy at the best of times, but don't let that put you off – this part of the island offers so many ways to entice, delight and indulge. Plus, you have your pick of some of Bali's best resorts and villas right on Seminyak's doorstep, all offering refuge from the hectic pace. →

ARYADUTA

BALI



YOUR JOURNEY TO BALI BEGINS WITH ARYADUTA

Jl. Kartika Plaza, Kuta, Badung, Bali - Indonesia 80361 | T. +62361 - 4754188 | E. info.bali@aryaduta.com
www.aryaduta.com/bali | Aryaduta Bali | aryaduta_bali



BALI *Dynasty* RESORT

SOUTH KUTA - BALI



INTIMATE ROMANCE PACKAGE AT BALI DYNASTY RESORT

Valid until 31 March 2020. Promo Code : ROMANCE

From
AUD 217
nett/night

Inclusion

- 2 Nights stay in a Deluxe Room
- Daily Buffet Breakfast for 2 people
- One time 60 Minutes Ashoka Signature Massage for 2 people
- One time Candle light Dinner for 2 people
- Fruit basket upon arrival
- Honeymoon souvenir upon check in

Terms & Conditions

- Package is valid for 2 people
- Not valid from 27 Dec 2019 - 5 Jan 2020
- Additional night AUD 193 nett/night

For details contact reservations@bdr.pphotels.com or visit www.bdr.pphotels.com

The Signature of Indonesian Hospitality

Jl. Kartika, P.O.Box 2047, Tuban 80361, South Kuta, Bali-Indonesia
+62 361 752 403 +62 361 752 402 info@bdr.pphotels.com www.pphotels.com www.bdr.pphotels.com



SHOPPING AND SUNSETS Kuta/Legian

Look past the notorious nightlife of Kuta and the crowded traffic jams of Legian, and you'll find yourself in classic Bali, where you can do as much or as little as you like, with ease.

Kuta has earned itself a reputation for too-loud bars and the kind of tourist crowd that, we're betting, most couples and honeymooners would rather avoid. But, dig beneath the surface and you'll strike gold: Kuta is home to some of Bali's original resorts and hotels – the kind where your day is spent swimming up to the pool bar, strolling down to the beach for a massage, or just lazing on a sun lounger under the swaying palms and doing as little as possible.

For those who want to be close to the action with an escape option on hand, head to the far less hectic area of Legian. Nestled between Kuta and Seminyak, it's home to one of the most iconic beach strips in Bali (hello, romantic sunset strolls!). The streets of Legian really are made for walking, but therein lies the beauty, as this area has some of Bali's cheapest and best shopping, as well as some great dining options, ranging from rustic local *warungs* to fabulous beachside fine-dining establishments.

SAVOUR

Kuta and Legian are full of simple pleasures, like afternoons that roll into evenings on the beach, or the joy of pulling up a beanbag at one of the many beach bars, toes in the sand, cold beer in hand, to watch surfers, tourists and locals.



As the sun slowly dips below the horizon, and the sky is washed with orange and red, you'll no doubt be feeling hungry, and **Chez Gado Gado** has been our preferred port of call for dining under the stars on this beach strip for more than a decade. The food here is fantastic and the relaxed setting never fails to impress.
gadogadorestaurant.com

The bar scene in Legian has come a long way in recent years, with a fresh crop of notable establishments popping up: think chic rooftop lounge bars with to-die-for ocean views, and wonderfully relaxed beach clubs that beg you to linger a little longer. The tiki-styled **Azul Beach Club**, with its three-storey thatched bamboo pavilion, is a fave of ours. It's a part of the fabulous **Bali Mandira Beach Resort & Spa** (*balmandira.com*) fronting Legian Beach, with an open-air restaurant including the sandy bar on the lower deck and an expansive second floor, where couples will love cocooning in one of the sunset pods overlooking palm trees and beach.
azulbali.com

FALL IN LOVE

Easy and affordable, this classic Bali destination may be busy, but it also combines convenience and fun in one locale. You can happily skip between a day of shopping and sightseeing to a night of debauchery and dancing, with plenty of relaxation to be found stretched out on a daybed on the beach or lounging by your resort's pool. →



(From top) Nab a beanbag and settle in for Legian Beach's free light show – the spectacular sunset; It's adults only at the heavenly Mandira Beach Resort & Spa pool; Cuddle up to your beloved in a nook overlooking the beach at Azul Beach Club. (Left) Discover the quiet streets of Legian.

“Chill out on loungers or pull up a beanbag on the sand at one of the area’s exclusive beach clubs”



BEACH BREAKS + CLIFFTOP LUXURY The Bukit Peninsula

Located on the southern tip of Bali, the Bukit Peninsula offers a wild landscape and some of this region's best surf breaks – it's also home to some of Bali's most popular and luxurious holiday destinations, each entirely different to the other, and offering their unique spin on an island idyll.

The four-kilometre arc of sand that runs along the bay of Jimbaran is perfect for lovers of barefoot luxury, and the torchlit seafood buffets that spring up here every evening are a testament to the toes-in-the-sand romance.

The world-famous surf breaks on the coastline of Uluwatu make this sacred ground to surfers,



while the clifftop region of Ungasan boasts not only some of Bali's premier luxury resorts but unparalleled beauty, with spectacular ocean vistas and secluded beaches.

Prefer to have your every whim and desire catered for without having to leave your hotel or resort? Head to the international resorts and hotels at the exclusive enclave of Nusa Dua, where there's also an exciting array of water sports available for the more actively inclined.

SAVOUR

The beach clubs of the Bukit Peninsula really set the benchmark for the island's most beautiful day-trip destinations.

Chill out on the loungers or pull up a beanbag on the sand at one of the area's exclusive resort beach clubs, many of which are accessed via awe-inspiring inclinators that career down the face of stunning limestone cliffs.

Sundays Beach Club is a little piece of paradise tucked at the bottom of the cliffs at the luxurious Ungasan Clifftop Resort, where (for an entry fee) you can while away the day swimming and sunbathing, sipping on cocktails and stand-up paddleboarding in the crystal-clear lagoon. sundaysbeachclub.com

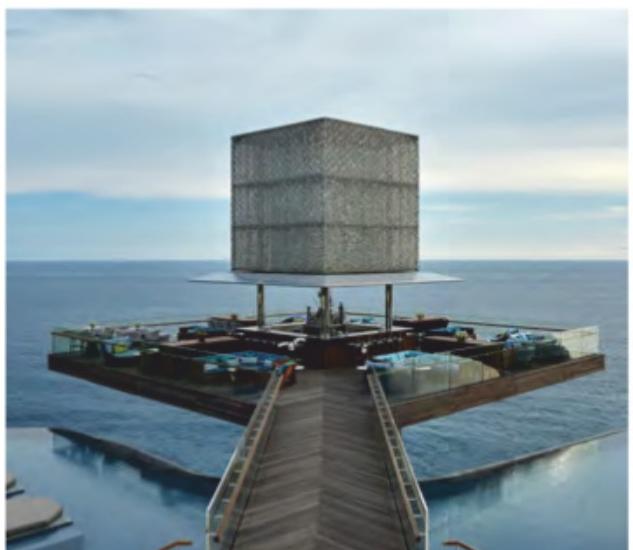
Karma Beach Bali (formerly known as Nammos Beach Club) is another classic destination, offering a windswept beach cabana and open-air thatched-roof restaurants beside private lounging quarters on the sand. Dance barefoot beneath the stars to some of Ibiza and London's hottest DJs, or bliss out at **Karma Spa**'s enchanting seaside tent. karmagroup.com/karma-beach

In Nusa Dua, look for the blue-and-white parasols of **Manarai Beach House**, which spills out from the haven of **Sofitel Nusa Dua Beach Resort**. This is the first beach club to bring the swanky Seminyak style to this usually sleepy strip of sand, with two swimming pools surrounded by daybeds and shaded outdoor lounges just made for kicking back, cocktail in hand. ismaya.com

Then there's the beach clubs with an elevated difference, like **Ulu Cliffhouse**, which has fast cemented its reputation as a preferred haunt for Bali's creative crowd since opening in 2017. A day spent here promises plenty of pleasures, whether enjoyed from your poolside lounge or one of the hammocks strung between palms, or from the jaw-dropping ocean deck with nothing but azure sea stretched out before you. Sip on inventive drinks and nibble on ocean-inspired classics and small tapas plates from the menu created by world-renowned Peruvian chef Diego Muñoz. Then wander halfway down the cliff face where you can access the private beach cove at low tide. ulucliffhouse.com



(Above) Karma Beach Bali makes the most of its delightful private cove. (Below) The dramatic Uluwatu coastline is hard to resist. (Bottom left) OMNIA's floating platform is topped with a giant crystal cube. (Bottom right) Low tide reveals a tiny beach at Ulu Cliffhouse. Opposite page: (Above) Manarai Beach House pioneered the beach club scene in sleepy Nusa Dua. (Below) Ulu Cliffhouse is a hotspot for creatives and travellers who adore its surreal location.



Continue your clifftop indulgence at **OMNIA**, a day club perched on a 100-metre-high plateau overlooking the ocean, complete with infinity pools with a swim-up bar, VIP cabanas, an ever-changing line up of international DJs, and a showstopping giant crystal cube atop the main bar. It's paradise found for party people – OMNIA is strictly adults-only, with entry restricted to those 21 years of age and over. omnioclubs.com/bali

For a complete change of pace, head to the sleepy seaside hamlet of Jimbaran, which offers a quieter holiday experience and some great dining options. Foodies will love **Kayumanis Jimbaran Private Estate & Spa**'s impressive restaurant **Kayumanis Resto**, housed within a replica of a traditional Javanese *joglo* (a style of timber home). The menu is all about authentic Indonesian cuisine, with distinctive dishes that honour different regions from around the archipelago, all made using locally sourced ingredients. kayumanis.com

EXPERIENCE

Uluwatu is a dream destination for surfers, thanks to its incredible surf breaks, but you don't need to be a pro frother to make the most of this idyllic location. A hike down the steep cliff steps of Blue Point Beach beckons the adventurous to paddle in, while the less inclined can kick back and watch the line-up from the safety of the legendary clifftop bar, **Single Fin**, nestled neatly just above the warungs and below the beautiful Blue Point Hotel. There's an epic Sunday session here, with a regular roster of international DJs and live acts. singlefinbali.com

Several kilometres between Bingin and Uluwatu lies Padang Padang Beach, one of Bali's most famous surf spots. It can only be accessed down a narrow flight of stairs, but you'll be rewarded for your effort with a

picture-perfect white sand beach, set between the dramatic limestone cliffs and crystal-clear aqua water. Feel familiar? It's a location that fans of the movie *Eat, Pray, Love* will recognise from one of the flick's many romantic scenes.

Although the big waves beyond the reef breaks are the territory of confident surfers only (definitely not suitable for beginners), novices can tackle the smaller waves in the right conditions, and there are board-hire places conveniently set up on the beach if you're inspired to give it a go. The shoreline is also great for a leisurely swim, and there are local stalls and warungs along the beach where you can grab a fresh coconut or a lunch of freshly-caught seafood.

FALL IN LOVE

Couples could easily book a holiday to centre around the Bukit Peninsula and soak up a different kind of experience every single day. From the wild and rustic beauty of the landscape to the pumping surf breaks and hidden beaches, and the unique array of luxury beach clubs hosting epic beach parties on the daily, it's all here on Bali's southernmost tip. →





(Top) Settle in for a posh picnic at The Lawn and enjoy its prime beachside position and swish, wet-edge pool. (Above) Surf's up! Whether you're a pro or a noob, Canggu has a wave for you. Hire a board at Batu Balong Beach and paddle out on your own, or book a few beginner lessons at one of the many surf schools in the area.

SURFER'S PARADISE Canggu

Morning surf checks, midday yoga, afternoon Bintangs and sunset cocktails are all part of the daily 'grind' in the chilled-out beach haven of Canggu. This charming area of Bali is actually a series of main drags – including the original and most populated centre of Batu Balong, where all the major shops, bars and restaurants are located, and the less crowded enclave of Berawa – all interspersed with rice fields, beautiful little boutiques and relaxed restaurants.

This corner of Bali tends to attract a mix of barefoot beachcombers, mad-keen surfers, fresh-faced health addicts, and digital nomads who figured out long ago that this right here is a little piece of nirvana, for a week, a month or a year: a place to find the slow in a fast-paced life.

SAVOUR

There are very few resorts here, so people tend to stay in private villas or boutique hotels – such as **The Slow** in Batu Balong, the passion project of fashion designer George Gorrora (of Tsubi fame) and his model wife, Cisco Tschurtschenthaler, which brings an element of arty, sophisticated cool to the old village vibe of Canggu.

Every element of The Slow is curated to please the aesthetic, from the edgy art on the walls and the on-site store stocking Gorrora's new menswear line, to the unspeakably chic artisan style of the rooms, the music piped throughout the hotel (a soundtrack – adjustable via in-room dials – crafted by Los Angeles-based Reverberation Radio), to the health-focused food served up in the bistro. Our hot tip: hit up the Sunday brunch from 11am-3pm, washed down with the house special, the Bloody Alice, for the perfect balance of naughty and nice. theslow.id

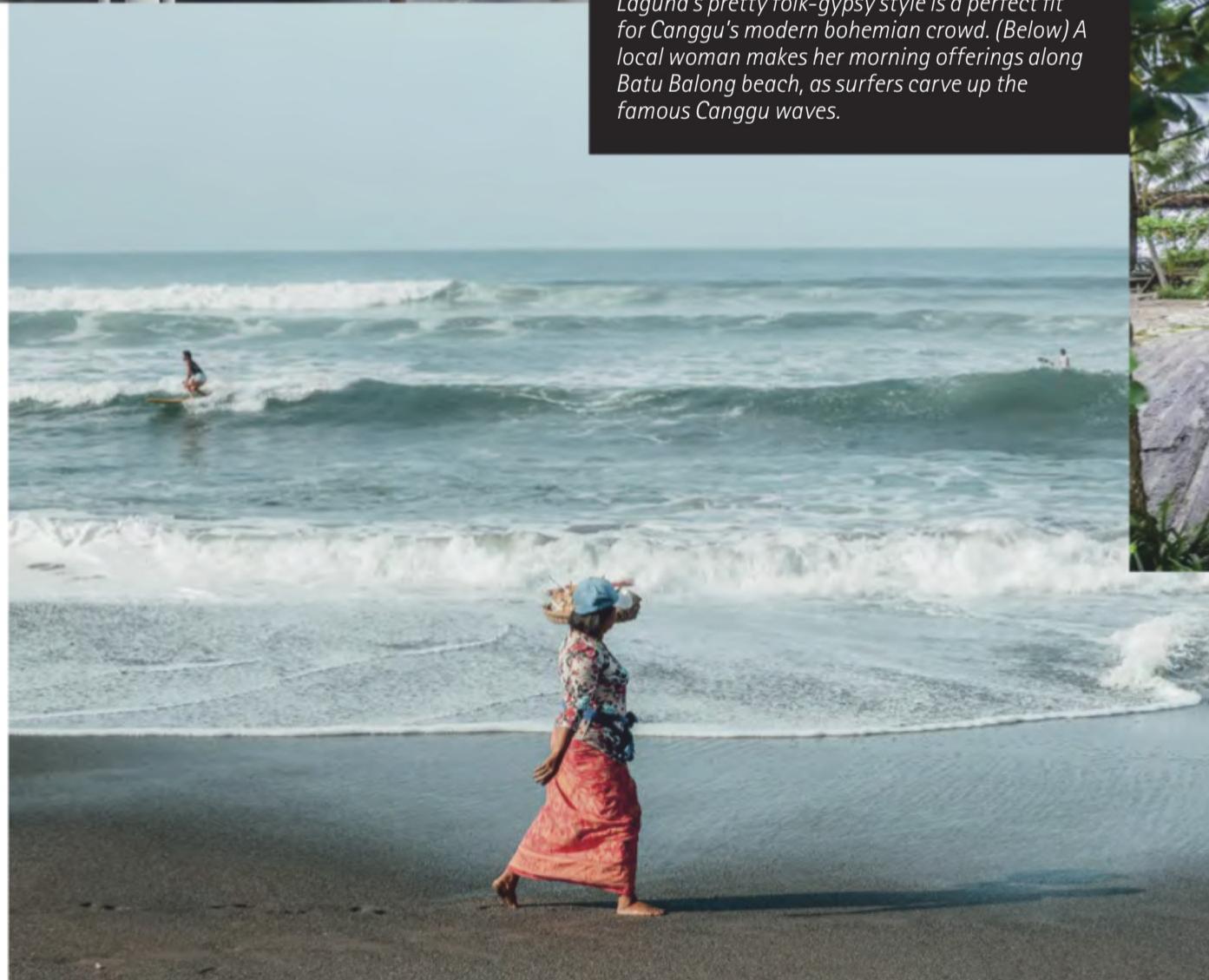
Canggu offers its own impressive cache of oceanside bars and beach clubs (this is Bali, after all!), with **The Lawn** a standout for its location overlooking the beach, seated picnic-style set-up on the grass, and in-demand lounges where you can sip on signature cocktails while the sun sinks behind the horizon. Make your way into the (always crowded) pool and head straight for the swim-up bar to keep the good times flowing. Bookings are essential here. thelawncanggu.com

La Laguna (lalagunabali.com) on the shores of Berawa Beach has long been the go-to destination for modern bohemians, with its vintage wooden gypsy caravans popping up on countless Instagram feeds. At the time of print La Laguna was under renovation, so in the meantime, head to its creators' latest quirky-cool destination at Echo Beach in Canggu, **La Brisa**, which takes the signature style of their first establishment and gives it a beach club twist. Rustic Spanish cuisine with a seafood focus and cocktails served under swaying palm trees entice you to settle in for golden hour. labrisabali.com

You could also easily hang from morning to midnight at the bamboo beach hangout of **Finns Beach Club**, which is set on absolute oceanfront looking directly over the famous waves of Berawa. You'll need to plan ahead, as daybeds can be booked no less than 24 hours in advance, but it will guarantee you a long, lazy day of swimming in the stunning 30-metre pool, complete with its own swim-up bar and underwater speakers so you don't miss a beat from the resident DJs. finnsbeachclub.com



(Above) Immaculately curated, *The Slow* offers an 'immersive experience' for its guests. (Right) La Laguna's pretty folk-gypsy style is a perfect fit for Canggu's modern bohemian crowd. (Below) A local woman makes her morning offerings along Batu Balong beach, as surfers carve up the famous Canggu waves.



PHOTOS: NATALIE BANNISTER

EXPERIENCE

Given the idyllic, laidback vibe of Canggu, it's no surprise that a community of expat designers and creatives have chosen to make this their home away from home. The good news for travellers? They've brought with them some amazing boutiques and shopping options that will satisfy the most serious design nuts and fashionistas.

For modern exotic decor, head to **Bungalow Living** in Berawa (it's a Balinese institution now!). You're guaranteed to find a little slice of the island to bring back home with you when you pay a visit to this delightful boutique/gallery/cafe – I can never resist stocking up on a few of their exquisite wares. bungalowlivingbali.com

Salty hair and sun-kissed skin is the order of the day in Canggu, where the surfing spots range from pro to novice-friendly and stretch out along five kilometres of beachfront. There's plenty of surf schools at the ready to teach beginners, while advanced boardriders will no doubt find their own kind of paradise.

FALL IN LOVE

This little fisherman's village offers an alluring brand of escapism, a mix of quiet urbanism (think: vibrant street art, trendy coffee houses and skate parks) and old-school vagabond Bali. ↗





(Above left) A rice farmer tends to his crop. (Above right) The ornate Saraswati Temple overlooks a large lilypond – a serene place of contemplation. (Above) Bridges restaurant offers a sophisticated take on the traditional rijsttafel, a 13-course feast of Indonesian cuisine. Opposite page: (Above) Jungle Fish is Ubud's beach club without a beach – bathe in the cool green of the jungle surrounds and its elegant pool instead. (Below) The divine Spa at Maya Ubud offers peace and relaxation in a spectacular riverside setting.

THE CULTURAL HEART Ubud

Conjure up the ideal image of a lush tropical getaway, and you'll imagine something very close to the jungle haven of Ubud. Set high up in the hills, it's a soul-nourishing mix of ancient temples and terraced rice fields, New Age retreats, yoga escapes and soothing day spas, gastronomic gems from world-class restaurants and, of course, incredible places to stay and play. Some of the most beautiful luxury resorts and villas in all of Bali can be found here in Ubud, making it a veritable paradise of pleasures.

SAVOUR

The 13-course Indo-Dutch rijsttafel dining experience can be found at many of Ubud's restaurants, a mouthwatering leftover from colonial Dutch Indonesia that includes a variety of small plates filled with different spicy and sweet Indonesian dishes. The beautiful **Bridges** restaurant, in the heart of Ubud town, is our favourite place to experience this traditional meal with a decidedly gourmet twist, paired

with a view over a lush green ravine. Lovers can even leave their own 'love lock' on the old tree by the bridge of Tjampuhan at the restaurant's entrance (order your padlocks engraved with your names a minimum of three days prior to your visit). bridgesbali.com

Even after over a decade of Ubud visits, I still can't pass up the chance to dine with one of the most breathtaking views of Tjampuhan Ridge and Mount Agung at **Indus**, the restaurant run by Australian expat Janet DeNeefe (from the famed **Casa Luna Cooking School** in town and creator of the international **Ubud Writers & Readers Festival**) and her Balinese husband. Arrive at twilight for drinks and stay on for a romantic dinner of authentic Balinese cuisine and Asian-inspired dishes. casalunabali.com/indus-restaurant

We also love **Locavore** on Jalan Dewi Sita, where the chefs whip up gourmet dishes using sustainably and locally sourced ingredients from the island itself, or from nearby islands including Lombok and Sumbawa. Be sure to also check out their 40-seater bar, **Night Rooster**, for nibbles washed down with finely crafted cocktails with exotic infusions. locavore.co.id

EXPERIENCE

Jungle Fish Bar (aka the ‘No-Beach Beach Club’), located high above Ubud’s Osh River at the boutique resort **Chapung Sebali**, offers a chic retreat for the day, with a swim-up pool bar where you can listen to music and lounge in the hanging chairs or private cabanas for a chilled out (yet oh-so-classy) time. Non-residents gain access to the pool facilities for a small fee, with a food and beverage credit included. chapung.com

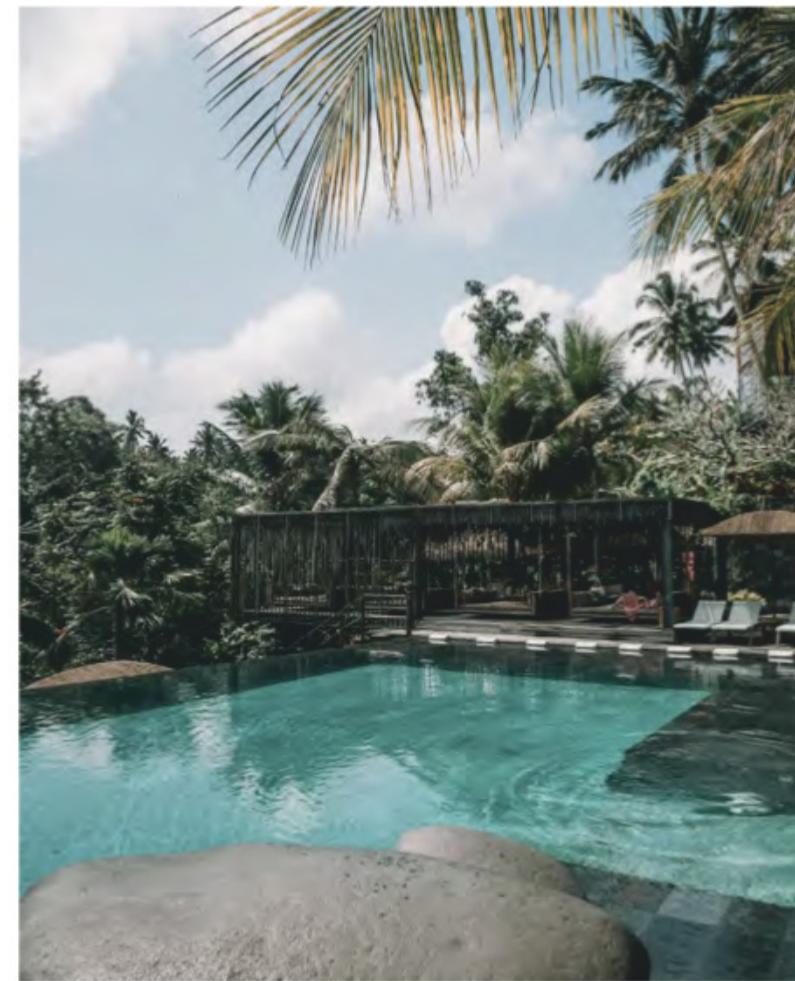
A walk through the rice fields is the perfect way to start the day, and you’ll pass smiling rice farmers tending their crops and remote villas scattering the hillsides, with a few hidden gems, such as traditional warungs (rustic local eateries serving traditional Indonesian dishes) and eco cafes along the way. **Sari Organik**, which floats in a sea of green rice paddies, offers tasty organic dishes in the most wonderful, relaxed open-air setting – perfect for a relaxed brunch.

Take in the majesty of the **Tjampuhan Ridge Walk**, which leads you over the top of one of Ubud’s many spectacular ridges, offering breathtakingly beautiful, sweeping views over the valleys on both sides.

Ask around at any restaurant in town for directions to any of Ubud’s rice field walking trails (there’s many, and all are easy to find). Many hotels and resorts also offer fantastic guided walking tours, which offer local insight into the farming community and the many traditional villages along the way.

You can also combine countryside expeditions with a cooking class through **Happy Bike Tours**, a local company that offers cycling tours down the backroads of Ubud, combining outdoor adventure with a fascinating perspective of Balinese culture. They also run cooking classes in a traditional Balinese compound, the home of tour owner and guide I Made Wira and his family. We loved spending a few hours learning how to prepare and cook some of our favourite Indonesian classics, including gado gado and a perfectly spicy *sate* (satay). You not only get to devour the results at the end but also take home the recipes, and spending time with Made is a total pleasure – this gentle and genuine man has a real passion for sharing the unique culture of his island home. happybiketour.com

Take the concept of a jungle escape to the ↗



“Set high up in the hills, Ubud is a soul-nourishing refuge”

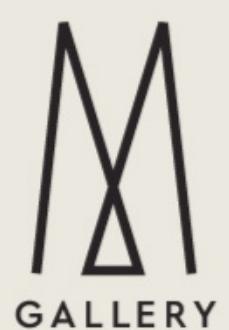




Amarterra Villas Bali Nusa Dua offer a unique and elegant blend of artistic Balinese ethnicity. Experience your memorable holiday of unprecedented luxury, serenity and novelty to achieve ultimate happiness.

BTDC Resort Lot Block B Bali 80363 Indonesia
TEL. +62 361 776400
FAX. +62 361 776300
EMAIL. sales@amarterravilla.com

www.amarterravilla.com





(Above) Stunning vistas and Ubud's lush tropical landscape. (Below left) A Balinese woman makes an offering at a temple. (Below right) Massages are delivered in private pavilions overlooking river and rainforest at the award-winning Spa at Maya Ubud.



next level of luxury with a visit to the multi-award-winning **Spa at Maya**. Set on the grounds of **Maya Ubud Resort & Spa**, right on the edge of the Petanu River in a deep, green gorge lush with palms, bamboo and banana trees, the Spa at Maya retains its reputation as one of the most stunning and peaceful spa destinations in all of Bali. Couples will love the tailored, pampering experiences on offer in their own private pavilion – the whole experience is nothing short of heaven. spaatmaya.com

FALL IN LOVE

Ubud holds a special kind of magic all of its own. It's a refuge of peace and tranquillity, a haven of breathtaking vistas and slow, simple pleasures. Thanks to the unique location, many of the resorts here offer a style of romantic escape unlike any other. Check in and chill out in this cool green oasis, where pure indulgence and luxury live alongside the beauty of traditional Balinese architecture and generous Balinese hospitality. Add to that some of Bali's most sacred sites, and you have yourself a very special destination, indeed. →

**LOW-KEY LUXE
Sanur**

Looking for some laidback, beachside bliss in Bali? Sanur might just be the tonic required for a rejuvenating holiday or honeymoon. This often-underrated area in the south and on the east coast has an old-school vibe of traditional Balinese lifestyle and hospitality, mixed with a range of gorgeous hotels and resorts and an uncrowded, community-focused centre of markets and warungs.

There's also some lovely waterfront eateries, and a well-paved track that welcomes you to hire a bike and safely cycle at your own leisure, plus plenty of spots to pull up a beanbag on the sand (note: this side of Bali isn't blessed with the eye-popping sunsets of Seminyak and other areas, but it sure does deliver with a sublime sunrise!). Sanur is also well known for water sports, for those who like a little more action, and it's the gateway for boat trips to the surfer's island of Nusa Lembongan and the Gili Islands beyond.

SAVOUR
Opened late last year, the stylish new bistro **Kayumanis Seaside Sanur** brings traditional elegance infused with island sophistication to Sindhu Beach. Dine out on the shaded verandah overlooking the coral-protected waters of the Indian Ocean and you'll soon see exactly where Sanur's charm lies. It's laidback, peaceful perfection and the ideal spot to eat, drink and unwind. Kayumanis Seaside Sanur's menu showcases the diversity of Indonesian cuisine, but there's also some beach club-style fare. kayumanis.com/kayumanis-seaside-sanur

FALL IN LOVE
While Sanur does attract plenty of tourists, it doesn't feel like it. This sleepy enclave offers one of the most relaxing getaways for those in the know, and unlike some other areas, a walk down the street doesn't feel like a Westernised tourist trap. It's Bali, but not as you know it. **H**

(Top left) What could be better than ice cream on the beach? Sanur does simple pleasures well. (Top right) Pull up a beanbag for a relaxed day on the sand. (Above) Kayumanis Seaside Sanur focuses on Indonesian classics, like this nasi campur (Left) A couple enjoy the low-key vibe of Sindhu Beach.



Room With A Soul – Where Tradition Meets Luxury

InterContinental Bali Resort is renowned for showcasing the best of Bali, with the essential components of Balinese Hindu

philosophies, imagery and symbolism prevalent throughout its design. The Resort follows the principals of 'Tri Hita Karana', which is the balance and harmony between the three sources of life – humans, nature and God, while the architecture also honours the sacred axis between the holy mountain and the sea.

InterContinental Bali Resort now continues this tradition with a comprehensive guestroom redesign

programme, which sets new standards for luxury accommodation in Bali and introduces world-class room technology.

Set in the heart of the resort, the newly appointed 49sqm. Singaraja Premium Room combines the beauty and grace of traditional Balinese design aesthetics with the sheerest of modern comforts.

Each Room is distinctly Balinese in character, portraying the elegant craftsmanship and delightful tropical ambience of the island. Unique artwork includes hand painted full-wall murals depicting local designs, and pendant lamps



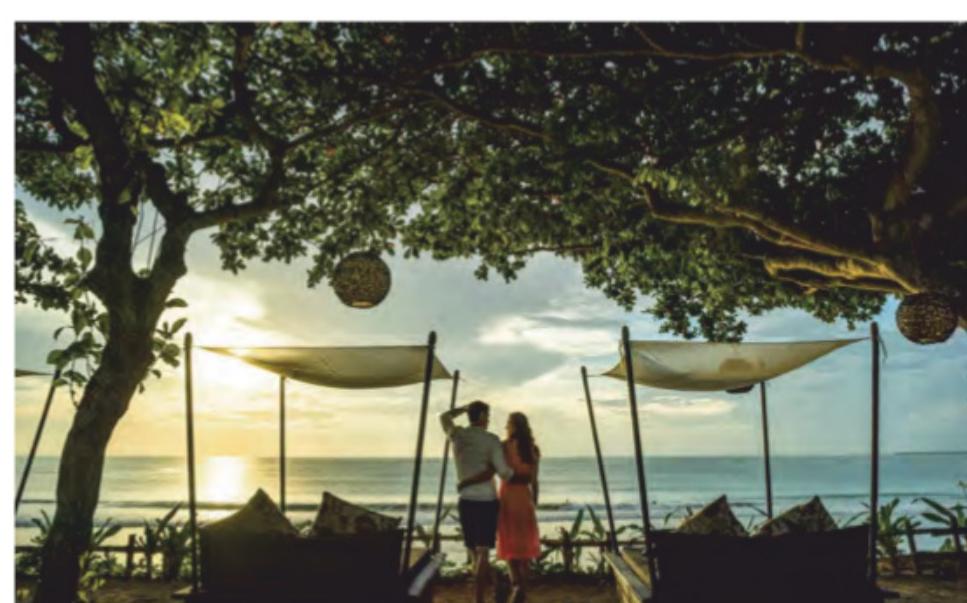
inspired by the elaborate terracotta crown finials of traditional Balinese thatched roofs. Stylish bathrooms have separate marble bathtub and adjoining dressing room with walk in wardrobe. A private balcony overlooks lush tropical gardens.

An ensuite marble bathroom includes a walk-in shower, with an adjoining grooming area and walk-in closet. The private terrace is ideal for appreciating the Resort's serene tropical gardens and lagoons.

Guests have exclusive access to the stylish Premium Lounge with dedicated Concierge Service and library with books, magazines, daily newspapers. Complimentary light refreshments range from fresh fruit to bakery selections, sandwiches, and hot and cold

beverages from 12.00noon till 6.00pm. Free-flow beer and local wine will be served between 5.00pm - 6.00pm.

InterContinental Bali Resort is one of the first luxury resorts, which rests alongside the magnificent golden-sand beach of Jimbaran Bay, complete with five swimming pools, award-winning restaurants and an internationally-acclaimed spa.



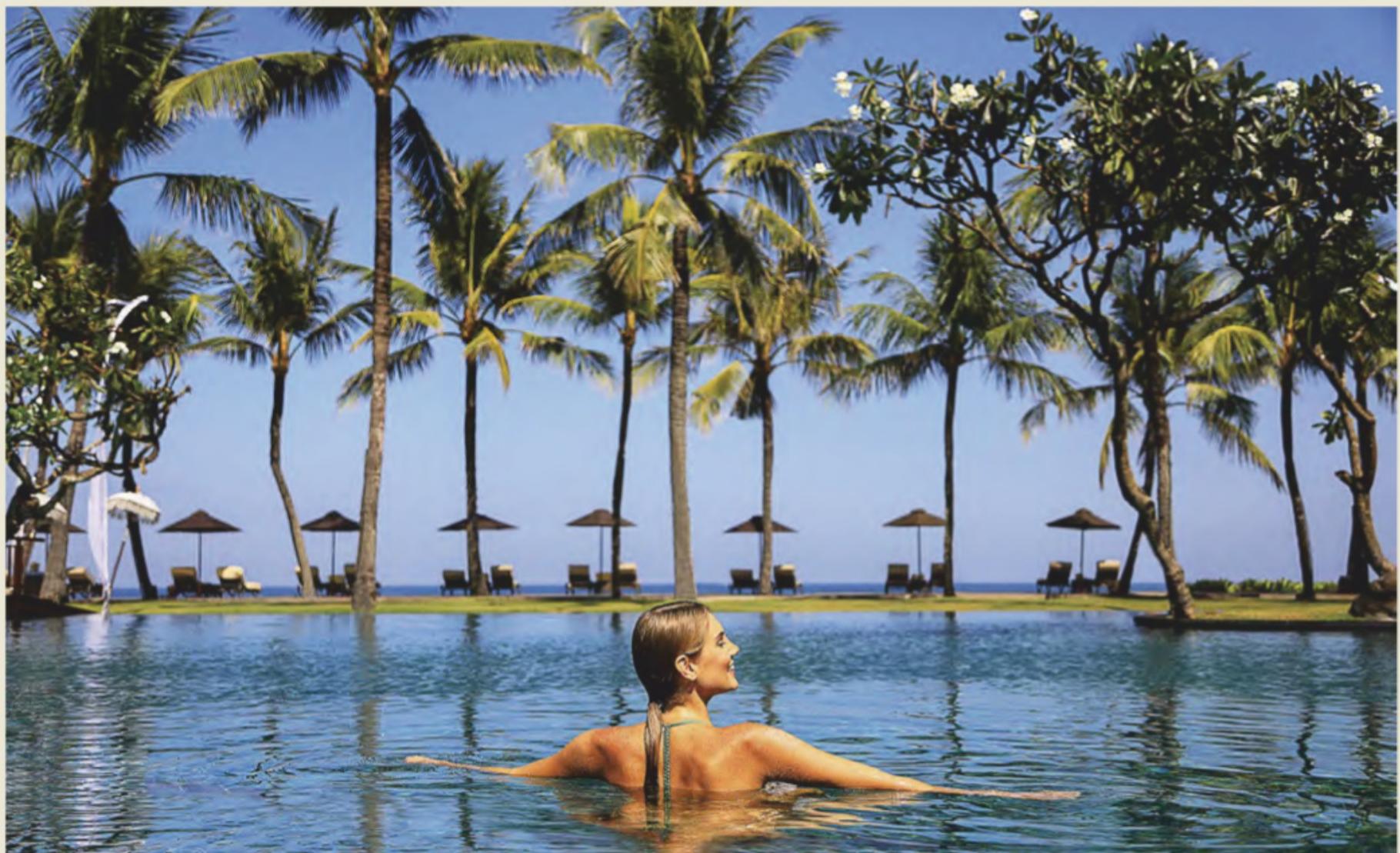
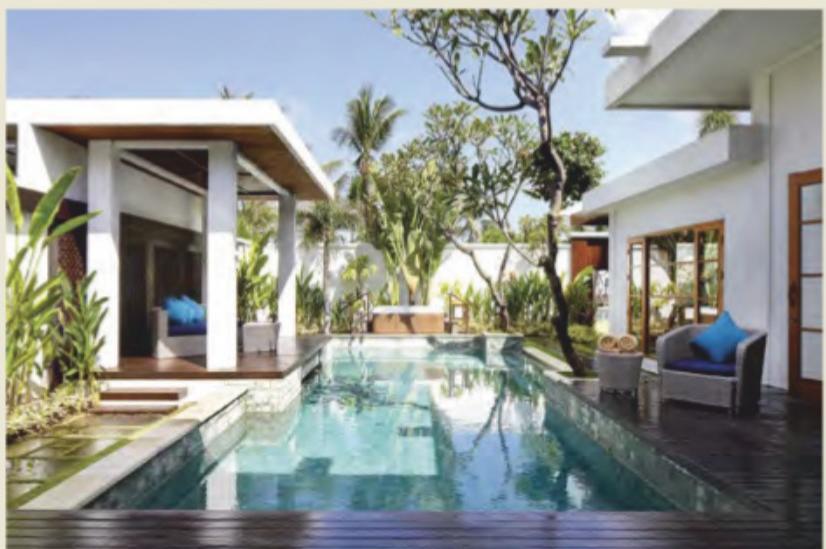
 **INTERCONTINENTAL**
BALI RESORT

// **InterContinental Bali Resort**
Jalan Uluwatu 45, Jimbaran,
Bali 80361, Indonesia
bali@ihg.com
bali.intercontinental.com

A PARADISE *of* YOUR OWN

THE SAMAYA
SEMINYAK-BALI

The Samaya Seminyak offers a prime beachfront location of Seminyak, which is also the vibrant playground of choice for Bali's resident fashionista crowd. With spectacular, unobstructed ocean views and arguably the finest view of the town's famous sunset, the resort is the natural choice for romantic couples and honeymooners wishing to escape the bustle of street life while remaining in walking distance of the area's famous boutiques, restaurants and bars.



Jalan Laksmana Seminyak, 80361
Bali – Indonesia
Ph: (62-361) 731149
E-mail: info@thesamayabali.com

thesamayabali.com



A PARADISE *of* YOUR OWN



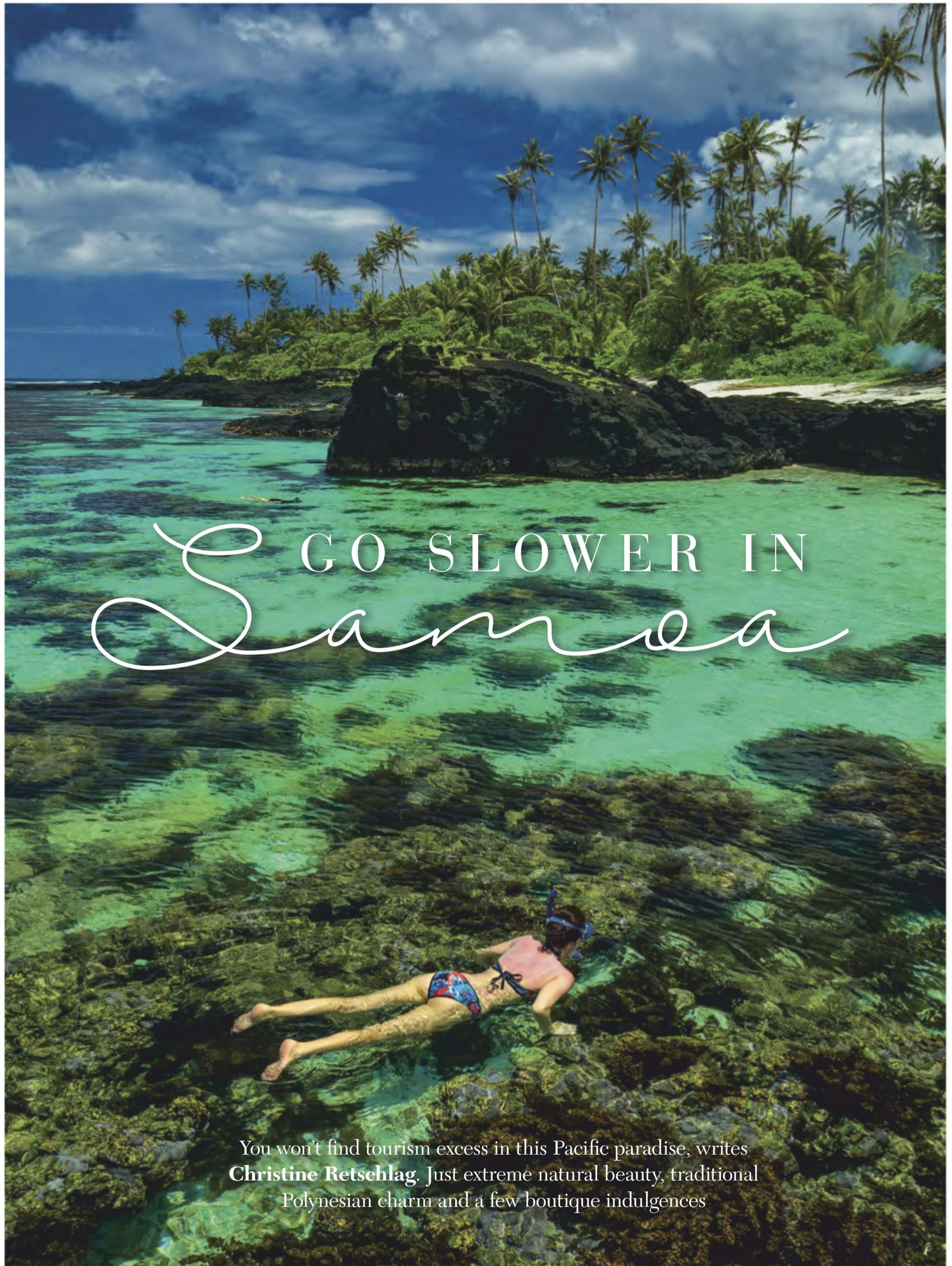
With spacious luxurious Villas, The Samaya Ubud offer guests privacy at an ideal place to relax in a tropical paradise surrounded by rice fields and the Ayung river.



Banjar Baung Desa Sayan, Ubud 80571
Bali – Indonesia
Ph:(62) 361 973 606
Email: info.ubud@thesamayabali.com

thesamayabali.com

THE SAMAYA
UBUD-BALI



GO SLOWER IN *Samoa*

You won't find tourism excess in this Pacific paradise, writes **Christine Retschlag**. Just extreme natural beauty, traditional Polynesian charm and a few boutique indulgences



Asamoan sunrise has torched the South Pacific sky like an Australian bushfire, illuminating the capital of Apia as the plane wheels kiss the tarmac.

Minutes later, I am in a mini-van, carving through the centre of the main island of Upolu, past coconut trees, churches, cackling chickens and clackety buses. It's both chaos and calm, wrapped in a palm frond.

There's dogs and kids jumbled into this magical mix along the roadside, where brazen boys and giggling girls with black plaited hair, weave their way to school. The air is peppered with wood-fire smoke while porky pigs and the odd cow slow our journey, but I am in no rush.

I have flown, overnight, via **Samoa Airways'** new route from Brisbane, and like the South Pacific paradise in which I find myself, I too, am just waking up.

I arrive at the aptly-named **Seabreeze Resort** in the island's south, just in time for breakfast. Chris and Wendy Booth, the Australian owners of this multi-award-winning property, have seemingly thought of everything. There's a free mini bar with a generous daily allowance of two local beers, a 375ml quality New Zealand wine or French Champagne piccolo, and two soft drinks (along with unlimited bottled water).

Breakfast is also complimentary and starts with a fruit platter featuring a shot of coconut juice, a shot of homemade yoghurt and a shot of bircher muesli. Then, it's a choice of juice, plus plunger coffee or tea, and a full cooked sweet or savoury breakfast.

Feast on the likes of freshly-caught mahi mahi for lunch in the **Waterfront Restaurant and Bar** or at **Paulini's Pool Bar**. On the weekend, indulge in a wood-fired pizza (try the house 'special' starring local lobster) at **Cbreeza Pizzeria**.

For dinner, consider the locally caught lobster, when it's in season, or the plentiful tuna.

I quickly slip into sync with Samoa, drinking milk fresh from the coconut and languishing in the warm ocean overlooking white, sandy beaches such as the famed Lalomanu.

Back at the resort, I indulge in massages and facials, the in-house masseuse slathering my face with concoctions of cucumber, honey, banana and lime. I smell good enough to eat.

Waterfalls trickle into the serene infinity pool overlooking the ocean, gently reminding

"I quickly slip into sync with Samoa, languishing in the warm ocean"



(Top) The luxurious Seabreeze Resort is located in a private, pristine bay. (Above) Take a tour of the island's many waterfalls, including the dramatic Sopoaga Falls, which is surrounded by manicured botanical gardens.

me to slow down. And I wait, impatiently at first, but eventually in tune with the ocean, for the tide to turn so I can snorkel, kayak and explore underwater.

I paddle south around Seabreeze Bay to an old church ruin that dates back to 1870. There's pink coral, blue starfish and the black shadows of Bat Island's winged inhabitants out here in the aqua sea.

With Seabreeze situated in the village of Aufaga, the Booths exclusively employ Samoans from nearby communities – 35 staff for the 12 rooms.

"We believe in you being totally spoiled," Wendy explains. "Our philosophy is: eat when you are hungry, sleep when you are tired, be pampered at every opportunity."

Guests can hire a car and explore the island on their own (it takes about two-and-a-half hours all up) or book a private half-day or full-day tour with a bespoke itinerary. Visit the nearby village, meet the school children, or attend a church service to really get a feel for (and fall in love with) the local life.

There's also day trips along the south-east coastline to the secluded Namua Island, where the turtles like to swim; to the thundering Togitogiga Waterfall and Sopoaga Falls; and out to the Sua Trench – a seemingly magical ocean tidal pool in which you can swim after descending a steep, timber ladder.

Pause along the way, stopping to buy fresh bananas and pineapples from makeshift wooden stalls, or to watch throngs of Samoans playing volleyball before the sun sets and they're called inside to prayer.

On Fridays, back at the resort, it's Fiafia Night, where guests can learn more about traditional Samoan culture while feasting on local delicacies, such as suckling pig, seafood poached in fresh coconut cream, and papaya drizzled with caramelised coconut sauce. ➤



Samoans sound like warriors when they speak in their own tongue, gentle giants whose words swirl around their mouths before being tossed like spears of vowels and a cacophony of consonants into conversations.

When they sing, it's like waves washing right over you, straight to shore and into your soul. And it's at that precise point, you know you have arrived in paradise, Samoan style. **H**

The Details

GETTING THERE

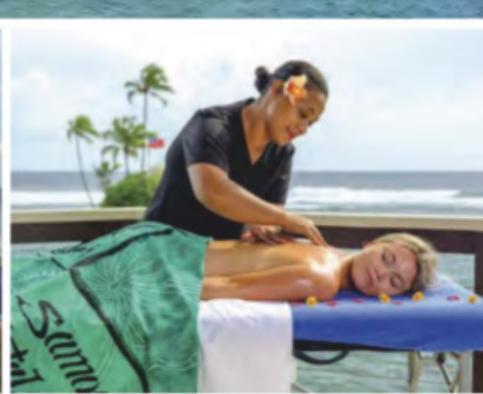
Launched in 2017, **Samoa Airways** has just added a new Brisbane-Apia leg to its routes across the South Pacific. Samoa's national carrier currently services Apia, Auckland, Brisbane, Pago Pago and Sydney. samoaairways.com

WHERE TO STAY

Situated in a secluded bay in the south of the main island, **Seabreeze Resort** is the only adults-only property in Samoa. Consider upgrading to the Honeymoon Point Villa (left) for the ultimate in luxury. seabreezesamoa.com

Seabreeze Resort Samoa

Nestled in a private, secluded bay, this intimate, luxurious resort caters exclusively for adults. An oasis of tranquillity perfect for a truly relaxing holiday, honeymoon or romantic escape.



bookings@seabreezeresortsamoa.com | seabreezesamoa.com





Thai the Knot Weddings is an Australian based boutique Travel Agency specialising in Destination Weddings in Thailand.

All Inclusive Wedding packages start from \$7500 AUD for 50 Guests at Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Merlin Beach.

Thai the Knot
WEDDINGS

Please email Annette
for more information
info@thaitheknotweddings.com.au
or 0417 729 423



The Tongsai Bay

Retreat to your own secluded paradise in Thailand's Koh Samui



Hidden amongst 28 acres of lush gardens and wrapped around a private bay, Koh Samui's The Tongsai Bay is renowned for its private and tranquil atmosphere. A place of extraordinary natural beauty and exceptional service, this eco-luxe escape is tucked away from the crowds... You won't have to jostle for space on the water or the beach, here. It's all exclusively available for guests — very VIP.

Just ten minutes from Chaweng Beach and Samui Airport, The Tongsai Bay is ideal for couples wanting to kick off their Thailand getaway as soon as possible. Despite being close to some of the island's top attractions, this pristine hideaway is home to exotic landscapes and over 60 different species of birds, creating a real 'escape from it all' vibe.

A verdant, horseshoe-shaped hillside protects Tongsai's namesake; a beautiful bay and 200-metre beach which is only accessible via the resort or the ocean. Kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and snorkelling equipment are complimentary — all water sports are non-motorised to preserve the bay's tranquil environment and excellent swimming conditions. Explore above or below the clear waters, relax poolside (two to choose from) with a cocktail, or chill out in the privacy of your own spacious villa.

Designed to ensure your stay is the stuff of daydreams, eleven superb accommodation

options range from sophisticated suites to glamorous pool villas (all with sea views and relaxing outdoor spaces). Couples will adore the Pool Cottages and Pool Villas which showcase postcard-perfect vistas as well as their own open-air 'bath with a view' and sparkling pool. Tongsai has taken this indulgent atmosphere a step further with their beautiful Prana Spa, featuring a full pampering menu and spa cottages created especially for couples.

When you're not sunbathing, swimming or blissing out in the spa, enrich your experience with a cooking class, yoga practice, or toes-in-the-sand movie night under the stars. And as this is Thailand, food is also a highlight! Don't miss the weekly beach barbecue, sensational Thai cuisine at Chef Chom's, or a private dining experience served by candlelight on the terrace or beachfront. The kitchens use herbs, fruits and spices from their own organic garden, just part of Tongsai's outstanding commitment to green principles and plant and wildlife protection.

The Tongsai Bay has managed to distil the romance and beauty of Thailand into one unforgettable destination. Tempted?

// **The Tongsai Bay**
+66 (0) 77 913 750
reservation@tongsaimay.co.th
tongsaimay.co.th





Just for the two of you, the choice is yours.

salahospitality.com

THAILAND



SALA
HOSPITALITY GROUP

SAMUI x 2 • PHUKET • KHAO • YAI • CHIANG MAI • BANGKOK • AYUTTHAYA

LAND OF *smiles*

Simon N. Ostheimer discovers the secrets behind
Thailand's best-loved destinations





BEST FOR... ROMANCE Koh Samui

Approaching the small, jewel-shaped isle of Samui, lush green mountains loom up out of the mist, as you fly close over colourful fishing boats bobbing in the emerald sea and the small wooden homes that line the sandy shore. It's no wonder it's been nicknamed 'fantasy island' by those lucky enough to visit. Most arrive via Bangkok – it's just a one-hour flight direct south from the busy capital, a pleasant jaunt over the Gulf of Thailand – before disembarking at one of the world's prettiest airports, an assemblage of open-air tropical-themed halls, navigated by trolley car, which sets the tone for the rest of the stay.

SEE: The weekly Sunday walking street market in the **Bophut Fisherman's Village** is a great place to pick up unique souvenirs and – when you need a break – people watch. Not far from here you'll also find the famous **Big Buddha**, and amazing coastal views.

EAT: You can find pretty much anything your heart desires in Samui, but for top-notch and inventive cuisine look no further than the warm wooden confines of **The Larder**. A close runner-up is the Mediterranean cuisine at **Link**, which also offers fine views of the beach.

DRINK: Depending on your mood, we offer up two of our favourite places for a tipple. **Coco Tam's** on Bophut Beach allows you to sit on the beach and enjoy cocktails by candlelight, but to really get away from it all, head up into the mountains and find the **Jungle Club**.

STAY: Koh Samui is awash with luxury lodgings. From **The Tongsai Bay** with its private beach and pool villas and cottages, to the **InterContinental** on the island's west coast, which boasts romantic sunset views. We also love the **Four Seasons** for its solitude, style and sophistication – not to mention fantastic service.



"It's no wonder the small, jewel-shaped isle of Samui has been nicknamed 'fantasy island' by those lucky enough to visit"



(Top) Indulge in a couples massage as the sun goes down at the InterContinental.
(Above) The Tongsai Bay's luxurious villas boast a private pool overlooking the water.
(Right) Link restaurant's Mediterranean meals are served with a side of relaxing beach views.



(Top) Head to the water for a stunning view of the Grand Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha. (Above) The Mandarin Oriental's romantic riverside restaurant showcases Bangkok's blend of old and new. (Below) You'll feel on top of the world at Moon Bar, one of the city's best rooftop cocktail bars.

BEST FOR... CITY LIFE Bangkok

It's so vastly different to the rest of the country, that in many ways Bangkok is not really Thailand. Krung Thep Maha Nakhon (meaning 'City of Angels'), to give it its Thai name, is a futuristic metropolis of 10 million people, full of skyscrapers, skytrains and sky-high prices (in the luxe shopping malls, at least). The ever-expanding city sprawls for miles, and seemingly never sleeps. However, alongside the world-acclaimed dining, buzzing nightlife scene and modernity, you can still find treasures of the past, such as the historic **Grand Palace** and **Temple of the Emerald Buddha**. In sum, the country's vibrant capital is a captivating blend of old and new.

SEE: The best way to see as much as possible in one day is to catch the **Chao Phraya Express Boat**, which runs up and down the city's river, stopping at all the major tourist attractions. Distinguished by a blue flag, it begins at the Saphan Taksin BTS stop.

EAT: With so many top tables in the city, the choice is endless, but you can't miss only the third street-food eatery in the world to win a Michelin star: **Jay Fai**, where the eponymous grandma serves up superb curry crab omelettes.

DRINK: From Cuban speakeasies to Shanghai-style nightclubs, Bangkok has it all covered, but to get your bearings before you dive right in, head to one of the city's dozens of rooftop bars – the best being **Moon Bar**, located in the lofty position of the 61st floor of the **Banyan Tree** hotel.

STAY: Bangkok is such a large city, that it's best to first decide what you want to see and do before choosing a hotel that will best suit your itinerary. That said, for vintage glamour, stunning riverside views and magical memories, we recommend staying at the **Mandarin Oriental**, which first opened way back in 1876. →



Jubilate a
Once in a Lifetime
Experience

at Silavadee Pool Spa Resort

We will make your wedding
a once a in a lifetime dream come true.



Silavadee Pool Spa Resort

208 / 66 Moo.4 , Maret, Koh Samui , Suratthani 84310 Thailand

Tel : +66 77 960 555 | Email : wedding@silavadeeresort.com

www.silavadeeresort.com



BEST FOR... BEACHES Phuket

Thailand's largest island – and gateway to the country's south – was once pockmarked by tin mines, giving it a desolate moonscape appearance. Thankfully, tourism has long since supplanted tin, and it has become one of the world's most famous tropical destinations. Most come for the sun and sand, with more than 30 beaches to choose from dotted along the shore. The most famous of these, with enticing names including Karon, Kata and Kamala, are down the west coast, where you'll also find the party town of Patong. Offshore there are many more islands to be discovered, meaning Phuket has a beach to suit everyone.

SEE: For a bird's eye view of Phuket, head up to the **Big Buddha** statue, which sits atop the island's highest mountain. Surrounded by a Buddhist temple complex, it's both a place of pilgrimage and sightseeing, with spectacular 360-degree vistas of the entire province.



(Top) Kamala Beach, with its well-enclosed bay and fishing village surrounded by forested hills, is just one of many delightful beaches on the island – your mission is to find a favourite. (Above) Perched above an infinity pool with views of the Andaman Sea, you'll feel like you're floating at the glorious Baba Nest cocktail bar. Our tip? Arrive in time for sunset and head straight to the rooftop. (Left) Paradise is the Rosewood's elegant – and private – resort setting, including the glamorous infinity pool.



EAT: With a wonderful melting pot of local cuisines that reflects the Thai, Chinese, Malay and Indian migrants that call Phuket home, you're spoiled for choice when it comes to dining out, but if we had to pick just one place it would be the **Blue Elephant** for its Old Town charm.

DRINK: There's no shortage of places to enjoy a drink on Phuket, but for a truly amazing setting, look no further than **Baba Nest** at Sri Panwa on the south coast. With a wooden deck seemingly floating on an infinity pool, the Andaman Sea stretches out before you.

STAY: Phuket has many lovely resorts perfect for honeymooners or couples looking for a luxury escape. The glamorous **Rosewood** – tucked away in Emerald Bay along a 600-metre long beachfront – is this writer's go-to for both privacy and romance. →



BEST FOR... CULTURE Chiang Mai

Home to more than 300 temples – more than anywhere else in the country – it's perhaps no surprise that Chiang Mai is considered Thailand's most cultured city. Founded in 1296 as capital of the independent Lanna Kingdom, today it's famed for heritage architecture – including a moat that still surrounds the city – a thriving scene of artists and galleries, the imposing Doi Suthep mountain, distinctive northern cuisine such as *khao soi*, surrounding green national parks still home to native hill tribes, and the beautiful annual festival of Yi Peng, when thousands of candlelit paper 'sky lanterns' are sent upwards to the heavens.

SEE: While you should definitely spend time exploring the city's temples, including the awe-inspiring Wat Chedi Luang, hilltop Wat Phra That Doi Suthep and iconic Wat Phra Singh, do make sure to visit the thought-provoking **MAIIAM Contemporary Art Museum**.

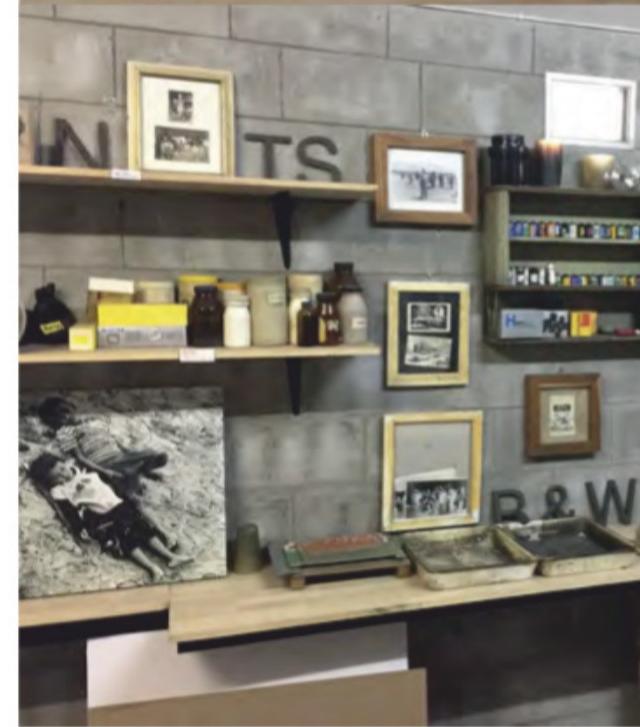
EAT: Given its love of the arts, it stands to reason that many of Chiang Mai's best places to dine combine culture and cuisine, such as gallery and restaurant **Seescape**; dual cafe and photography studio **Rakuda**; or flower shop, lifestyle store and eatery **Woo**.

DRINK: It may not be indigenous to Thailand, but jazz has been embraced by the locals – the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej was a keen jazz saxophonist who once shared a stage with Benny Goodman. For local beats and bebop, head to the **North Gate Jazz Co-Op**.

STAY: Hugging the shore of the sleepy Mae Ping River, in the city's historic east quarter, the **Anantara Chiang Mai Resort** is a luxurious property that combines colonial and Thai influences with tranquil surrounds, comforting spa and a superb location in the Old City.



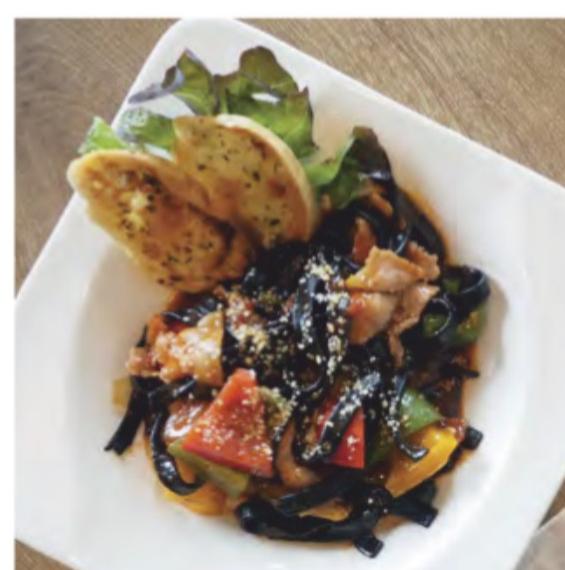
(Clockwise from top left) Matcha treats at Rakuda; Seescape gallery founder and artist Torlarp 'Hern' Larpjaroensook at work; Explore photography at Rakuda then settle in for an Insta-worthy brew; Woo combines floristry and coffee; Don't miss the MAIIAM museum.



“Kanchanaburi has a dark history that contrasts with a vibrant present”



(Above and below right) Visitors flock to Library Cafe for its excellent food. (Above right) Head to the River Kwai Bridge early to cross on foot. (Below left) A local temple. (Bottom) Chungkai War Cemetery is a sobering experience.



BEST FOR... ADVENTURE Kanchanaburi

A two-hour drive west of Bangkok, in the foothills of the mountains that separate Thailand from Myanmar, Kanchanaburi has a dual identity. It has a dark history as the site of Allied POW camps during World War II, and the infamous ‘Death Railway’ the prisoners laboured to build from here to Burma through impenetrable jungle. That contrasts with a vibrant present, with visitors flocking to lush national parks filled with flowing waterfalls and atmospheric caves; spending time rafting, jet-skiing, and cruising on the River Kwai, and exploring the charming Old Town. It’s this split personality that makes it an ideal destination.

SEE: The town’s most famous attraction, the bridge across the River Kwai, was immortalised in the 1957 film of the same name. Arrive early to walk across before the train from Bangkok arrives, and then pay a visit to the **Thailand-Burma Railway Centre** for a detailed explanation of its construction.

EAT: Given its laidback atmosphere, don’t expect to find fine dining in Kanchanaburi, but there are still a range of great options, from the stylish decor and desserts at **Library Cafe**, popular with day trippers from Bangkok, to the quality homestyle meals on offer at **Mangosteen**.

DRINK: For cold beers in an equally chilled setting, head to the bars that line Mae Nam Kwai Road, just southeast of the bridge. For something a little different, try craft beer bar **The Balcony** on Pakprak Road – a charming strip of century-old shophouses and mansions.

STAY: It’s a little ways from town, but the quiet location of the **X2 River Kwai Resort** means you can appreciate the incredible natural beauty of Kanchanaburi away from the crowds. We highly recommend the floating cabins with their private rooftops and industrial-chic design. →



Reimagined. Refreshed. Relaxed.

Experience the all-new Amari Koh Samui with a fresh look that embraces warm, welcoming spaces, delectable dining and our legendary Thai hospitality.

Scan the QR Code to receive discount and complimentary dinner when staying minimum five nights.



*Terms and conditions apply

For more information contact +66 (0) 77 300 306-9 or reservations.kohsamui@amari.com

Best Rate Guarantee



Chaweng Beach, Koh Samui | www.amari.com



Bangkok Buriram Dhaka Doha Galle Hua Hin Johor Bahru Koh Samui Krabi Maldives Pattaya Phuket Yangshuo Vang Vieng

Welcome to Zeavola

A sustainable Phi Phi Island luxury resort with an air of rustic romance, located on the tranquil white sand of Laem Tong Beach.

Step back in time and immerse yourself in the simplicity of rural village life in teakwood suites that bring you closer to nature. Fill your days with exciting journeys of exploration and adventure on the Andaman Sea, pampering spa treatments, cooking classes and indulge in authentic cuisine.



Zeavola
Step back to simplicity



Website : www.zeavola.com | Reservation phone number : +66 75 627 000
Reservation email address : reservation@zeavola.com

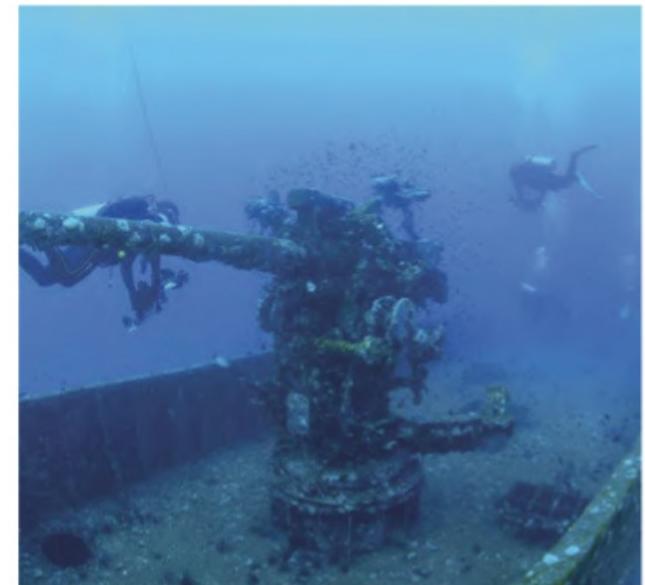


(Above and below right) Soneva Kiri Resort is an environmentally friendly luxury enclave on the secluded island of Koh Kood. (Above right) The wrecked Thai vessel HTMS Chang is a fascinating drawcard for adventurous scuba divers. (Below) A visit to this island means embracing the ocean – explore the pristine region via boat.

BEST FOR... ISLAND-HOPPING Koh Chang

Located in Thailand's most easterly coastal province, Koh Chang is part of a national park that includes more than 50 islands. The name means 'elephant island', but – although many camps dot the landscape – the gentle giants are not actually indigenous, with the name instead referring to the isle's distinctive shape. In 1941 it was the scene of a major naval battle between the Royal Thai Navy and French forces based in neighbouring Cambodia, but has otherwise been a sleepy home to fisherman and farmers. In recent years more upscale luxury resorts have opened, adding to the charms of this picturesque destination.

SEE: Given that you're on Thailand's third largest island (after Phuket and Samui), a visit to Koh Chang means embracing the ocean. Explore the fish-filled waters on a snorkelling or scuba trip, with the latter allowing you to explore the wrecked Thai ship *HTMS Chang*.



EAT: There are many fantastic places to eat along Koh Chang's sandy beaches, but for a taste of something different, try **The Buddha View**. Located at the end of the Bang Bao Pier in the island's southwest, you dine on superb seafood in a stilt house built upon the water.

DRINK: You don't come to the island for sophisticated cocktail lounges, so mellow out like the locals do and pull up a beanbag at a beach bar. White Sand Beach on the west coast is full of great venues offering this vibe, including **15 Palms, Sabay Bar** and **Sun & Soul**.

STAY: There are places for all budgets and tastes on Koh Chang, but for a true escape from it all, catch a boat south from the island to nearby Koh Kood and discover the remarkable **Soneva Kiri** resort, with its inspiring natural setting, top-notch service and sublime spa.





TWINPALMS
PHUKET



CAPTURE THE PASSION WITH AN ESCAPE TO PARADISE

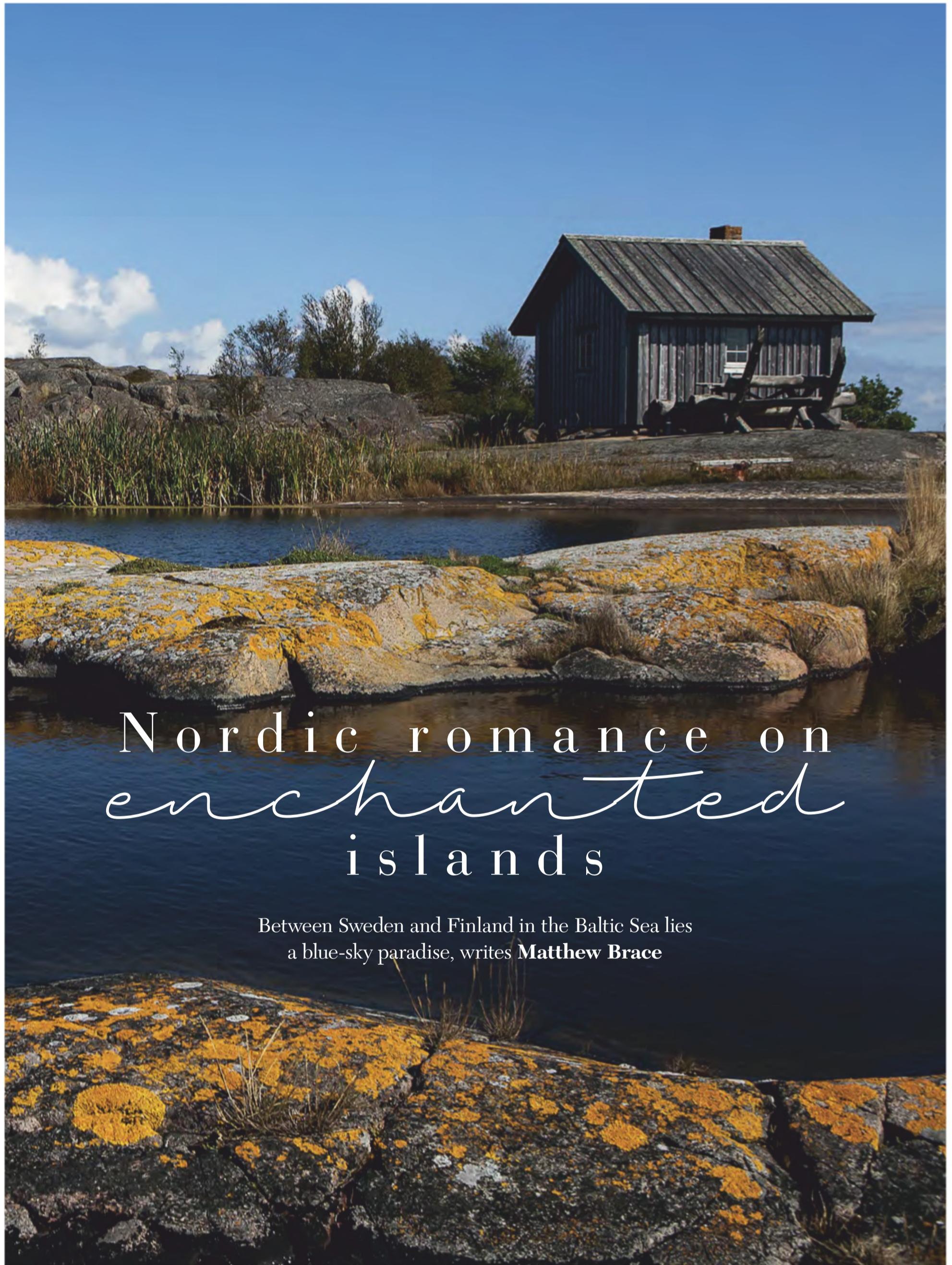
Whatever you are both seeking on your romantic escape, whether it be the time to retreat or to step out and enjoy all that Phuket offers, Twinpalms is a place where couples will delight in spending precious time together with privacy and space.

Enjoy long days relaxing by the pool, laidback seafood lunches by the beach and tours out on one of our yachts to marvel at the stunning scenery surrounding the island. Experience sultry sunset dining followed by dancing the night away under the stars with your toes in the sand.

Book an unforgettable honeymoon or intimate stay that will be sure to ignite your love for each other.



Twinpalms Phuket
Phuket's Most Exciting & Stylish Contemporary Resort
106/46 Moo 3, Surin Beach Road, Cherng Talay, Phuket 83110, Thailand
t +66 (0) 76 316500, f +66 (0) 76 316599
e book@twinpalms-phuket.com w twinpalms-phuket.com



Nordic romance on enchanted islands

Between Sweden and Finland in the Baltic Sea lies
a blue-sky paradise, writes **Matthew Brace**



The writer's boathouse boasts idyllic waterfront views.
(Opposite page) Flags must be displayed on boats, while bikes are the best mode of transport.

We woke in the boathouse at dawn. The water lapped outside our window and an early boat puttered past in the distance, somewhere out on the sound. The soft morning mist was thinning and from it emerged a family of swans gliding past the wooden jetty.

As the sky began to clear, a wide expanse of water was laid before us, glistening in the late summer sunlight.

We sat on the back deck, watching swallows as they darted and swooped for insects, and listening to the bull rushes sighing contentedly in the breeze. It was one of the most peaceful and romantic mornings we could remember.

Romantically different

We were in the Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea between Finland and Sweden. As die-hard Scandiphiles, we love being up at the top of the world where the duck-egg-blue skies go on forever and the Nordic air cleanses the soul. We'd flown over the islands several times before and promised we'd explore them one day and swim in the Baltic, no matter how icy the water.

There are more than 6,700 islands, islets and skerries in the archipelago. Some require most of a day to cycle across, while others are little more than large boulders poking their foreheads above the high-tide line.

The islands are part of Finland yet the vast majority of locals speak Swedish. A common reply when we naively apologised for not speaking Finnish was – in perfect English – “no problem, nor do we”. Yet the islands are autonomous. They have their own parliament, car registration plates, internet suffix (.ax) and flag, which must be flown from every boat but promptly taken down at sunset, for reasons we never fully grasped. Maybe it's just another of those beguiling Nordic eccentricities.

Paradise at 60°N

We were blessed with the weather, catching the last days of one of the hottest summers the islands have known. For the first few days we sunbathed on the boathouse's jetty, spent hours in the sauna gazing through the huge picture window overlooking the Baltic and the nearby islets, and sipped sundowners on the deck. We could hardly believe we were up at 60°N.

The boathouse is an Airbnb whose delightful owners, Jussi and Maria, live next door. The place comes complete with bicycles, which we used to spin about the islands, and a kayak and a rowing boat with an outboard motor. Jussi helped us with pronunciation (it's *uurr*-land, not *al*-land or *ar*-land), gave us invaluable tips and even brought us a local perch, freshly caught and still warm from the smoking shed.

The long warm days had ripened the islands' abundant apple crops and they were already carpeting the grassy orchards, weeks ahead of schedule. As we pedalled along the cycle paths, we drank in their sweet, cidery scent. →



In the small capital, Mariehamn, we took ourselves on a self-guided architecture tour of the charming wooden-boarded houses along Skillnadsgatan and then set about shopping for our boathouse suppers – we were self-catering and determined to eat like locals. One stop was the **Fina Fisken** fish shop north of Mariehamn's centre, where we bought tubs of fresh shrimp and *skagenröra* (a delicious dill, lemon and red onion mayonnaise) to make one of our favourite Scandi dishes – Skagen toast. We also threw in a haunch of traditionally smoked salmon, which was so divine we ended up adding it to every breakfast, lunch and dinner.

If you don't fancy cooking for yourselves every night, or if you are staying in a hotel, Mariehamn is home to some charming restaurants and cafes. For a snack or tea and cake, try the delightfully traditional **Kaffestugan Svarta Katten** (Black Cat Café) on Norragatan. For a romantic meal of modern Nordic cuisine (think cured rainbow trout, buttered local perch, and lamb with white asparagus), try **Nautical on Hamngatan**, just north of the ferry terminal.

One day we ventured further afield, cycling south of Mariehamn along the 18km Järsö Route to the tip of a forested peninsula. There, we found a gloriously cosy cabin housing the **Stickstugan Café**, where we refuelled for the return leg.

The next day we headed north to Godby, famous for the **Stallhagen** brewery which produces a variety of beers, including one called Historic, also known as Shipwreck Beer. The recipe is based on a brew found in bottles salvaged from an 1840s wreck that were still sealed after spending 170 years on the seabed. It's a moreish drop, but thankfully the ride home was largely downhill.

After two days in the saddle we gave the bikes a rest and took a boat tour out to Kobba Klintar, one of the far western skerries. The old pilot station and cafe had closed for the winter and the island was breathing a sigh of relief after a tourist-thronged season. The place felt enchanted, in that uniquely melancholic, Scandinavian way.



One perfect day

On our penultimate day in the islands, we packed some bread and yet more smoked salmon (to which we were now unashamedly addicted) and set out in our little boat. Not wanting to break the calm with the roar of the outboard, I rowed. Under a cloudless sky and lulled by the meditative sluice of oars through water, we glided serenely around the shores of the wooded islets we had been gazing at for the past few days from the boathouse deck.

One had a small beach so we moored and clambered over the smooth, warm granite rocks to a vantage point. This was Saltholm – unspoiled, uninhabited and ours for at least a few magical hours. We explored the interior, imagining where we might build our romantic fantasy cabin, dine out on mild nights under polar stars, and launch out on deep midwinter skating expeditions across the frozen sea.

We sunbathed, ate our smoked salmon sandwiches, watched a sea eagle hunting on its stretch of still water and – keeping our promise – plunged into the Baltic. A perfect day!

The Åland Islands tourism website encourages visitors to “fall in love with the cosy island pace”. We did. And we’re going back next year. **H**



(Top) Cured salmon is a traditional Scandi treat. (Above) Enjoy craft beers at the Stallhagen microbrewery.

“At the top of the world, the duck-egg-blue skies go on forever and the Nordic air cleanses the soul”



The Details

GETTING THERE

The Åland Islands are easy to reach from major European capitals, with daily flights from Helsinki and Stockholm, and numerous ferries from all around the Baltic. From Australia fly to Bangkok or Singapore on **Qantas** and then transfer to codeshare partner **Finnair** direct to Helsinki. Finnair subsidiary **Norra** has two flights a day from Helsinki to Mariehamn (about 60 minutes), with a quick stop in Turku.

WHERE TO STAY

Maria and Jussi's boathouse Airbnb in Jomala is excellent if you are after peace and quiet, a luxurious sea-view sauna, a sun-drenched deck and romantic days rowing your partner around deserted islets. airbnb.com.au/rooms/13912153

Mariehamn has plenty of good small hotels and the Åland Islands official travel site has a good selection of guesthouses in bucolic rural locations. visitaland.com

(Top) The capital of Mariehamn is dotted with pretty painted timber houses.
(Above) Kayaking is an ideal way to see the many islands, islets and skerries of the Åland Islands.

PHOTOS: © MATTHEW BRACE;
VISIT ALAND / GULA KLIPPOR; HEIDI MS IKONEN



EAT AND DRINK

Kaffestugan Svarta Katten: svartakatten.ax

Nautical: nautical.ax

If you're after fish, head straight for **Fina Fisken** just off Godbyvägen, a leisurely 20-minute cycle ride north of Mariehamn centre. finafisken.ax

And don't forget to try one or two **Stallhagen** beers, and the local cider. stallhagen.com

WHAT TO DO

To book a boat excursion to Kobba Klintar, head to visitaland.com

Cycle to your heart's content along fabulous cycle paths and alongside arguably the most courteous cyclists in the world. **RO-NO Rent** has two cycle hire outlets in Mariehamn but it's worth asking your hotel or Airbnb, as many rent bikes to their guests too. In high season try to reserve online in advance to avoid missing out on a set of wheels. rono.ax

SHOP

The Varuboden City supermarket in Mariehamn (on Torggatan near the junction with Nygatan) is a great one-stop-shop, and has its own Stallhagen display stand. Don't miss **Salt**, full of beautifully made local crafts. In half an hour we found almost all our Christmas presents for relatives. Pack some reusable shopping bags and be aware there's an evening curfew on buying booze, which in some shops is as early as 6pm. salt.ax

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL

Take your pick: spring brings carpets of meadow flowers into bloom. Summer (high season) is rich with long sunny days and mild nights; villages celebrate midsummer by dining on pickled herring and new potatoes and dancing around their decorated maypoles. Autumn is when the islanders celebrate their harvest and unpack their winter woollies in preparation for the severe winter. Up here at 60°N, the Baltic can freeze hard, allowing locals to ski and skate across it to their friends' islands for a sauna.

great DESTINATION WEDDINGS

WHY HAVE AN ORDINARY WEDDING WHEN YOU CAN HAVE A DESTINATION WEDDING?

Visit *GreatDestinationWeddings.com.au* where you'll discover a library of hand-picked wedding resorts from Australia, Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Plus, there are destination wedding planning guides, Real Wedding stories and a plethora of articles to ensure you'll pull off the most amazing wedding away, regardless of where you marry!

BIKE & BARGE CYCLING CRUISES



FRANCE ITALY HOLLAND BELGIUM GERMANY AUSTRIA ROMANIA CROATIA GREECE TURKEY SCOTLAND

Join us for a week of easy to moderate cycling with river, canal or coastal island cruising. Regular departures from March to October - choice of comfortable barges - cabins with own bathroom. Talk to the Bike & Barge experts:

Tel: 1800 331 582 outdoortravel.com.au



Culinary conquests in Chile

Adventurous indigenous cuisine, breathtaking valley vistas and glorious new world wines makes Chile a delicious destination for gastronomy lovers, writes **Yasmin Noone**





While some lovers are destined to spend their vacations on white sandy beaches, food and wine lovers are called to look towards South America's richest country, Chile, for romantic holiday satisfaction. For it is in Chile – a long, slender country of contrasts spanning three continents – that a passionate affair with new world wines and regional cuisine can be woven into one gastronomic getaway.

We begin ours in the nation's eclectic capital, Santiago, after a 12-hour direct flight from Sydney. Having collected our rental car from the airport depot, we drive 30 minutes to **Solace Hotel** Santiago, located in Providencia. The well-positioned new hotel features contemporary rooms with king beds, chic amenities and a rather lovely rooftop bar – where we head immediately for a Chilean pisco sour.

We sip on our alcoholic introduction to Santiago before dipping into the narrow rooftop pool, taking rest at the edge to admire our sun-drenched metropolis view and the glorious Andes Mountain range enveloping it.





(Left) Glittering Santiago is embraced by the Andes and the Chilean Coast Range. (Above) Diners are surrounded by vines during lunch at Fuegos de Apalta. (Above right) Foie gras at Boragó. (Below) The glamorous Clos Apalta residence at Lapostolle Winery reflects the owners' French heritage.



Soon enough, the warm evening hours fall upon us and so too does the culinary truth behind why we really decided to visit Santiago: to fulfil a bucket list dream and dine at number 42 on The World's 50 Best Restaurants list: **Boragó**.

The restaurant creatively showcases Chile's lesser-known indigenous ingredients, sourced from over 200 small producers scattered across a range of climatic zones, from desert to icefield. Boragó's still water is derived from Patagonian rain and the milk used for ice cream comes from cows milked by Boragó staff.

Our senses are aroused as soon as we step out of the taxi into the affluent suburb of Vitacura. Although, without the two chefs out front subtly fanning a whole lamb that's been roasting on charcoal for 11 hours, you wouldn't guess that inside this modest dwelling is culinary ingenuity. With the ring of a golden bell we are welcomed by four attentive staff and guided to our seat, positioned beside an open wall and edible garden.

Our 16-course meal with matching Chilean wines lasts four hours. We drink seafood soup from an animal horn, chow down on a succulent plant, taste wild apples the size of our thumbs, and sample loin from the lamb baking out front.

Our unusual, innovative dinner at Boragó is immediately noted as the best dining adventure of our lives. We're told it's the vast expanse of country and range in terroir that gives Chilean food its unique flavours, treating visitors to remarkable food and wine experiences.

Eager to sample more national produce, the next day we drive three hours south – passing agricultural lands, roadhouses selling homemade empanadas, and countless trucks – to reach iconic wine region the Colchagua Valley. Colchagua produces some of the best carmenère and shiraz wines in Chile and is home to Apalta – a valley within a valley that was added as a new Denomination of Origin in 2018.

The rustic scenery here is the stuff of tourist

brochures. The Tinguiririca River brings water from the snow-capped mountains of the Andes, making the valley lush and green all year round, and the verdant landscape is decorated with working farms kept by cowboys and vineyards scattered to the horizon.

And yet, despite the area's natural beauty, nothing tops the image of our accommodation at **Cava Colchagua Hotel Boutique**. Situated in the valley's main town, Santa Cruz, this family-owned hotel features guest rooms created from 100-year-old, 45,000-litre wine barrels. Set over five hectares in the middle of a vineyard, this unique hotel encompasses picturesque gardens, a pool, a lagoon complete with paddleboat, hot tubs and a beauty spa.

Our charmingly rustic wine barrel room is air-conditioned and spans two storeys to accommodate a bedroom on one level and bathroom on the other. We quickly soak up the wine-laden atmosphere on a canopy bed beside the pool as we take in the architecture, sip on a carmenère blend and devour a platter of valley cheeses bought at the hotel.

Later in our stay, we visit five cellar doors on a private tour with local company **Colchagua Wine Tours**. Our tour guide, Francesco, explains that only 16 wineries in the area are open to the public and about half of the vineyards are gated – so booking in advance is highly recommended.

The Colchagua wine trail, little known for many years, has enjoyed a recent surge in popularity thanks to an unexpected source: Carlos Cardoen, a former arms dealer who allegedly sold bombs to Saddam Hussein. In the 1990s, after the USA issued an international arrest warrant against him, Cardoen turned his attention to winemaking and put his beloved area on the global wine map. We note that Cardoen runs a casino and history museum in the Santa Cruz town centre. Francesco assures us the region is safe, which is how we feel throughout our stay.

Our tour also takes us to **Lapostolle** winery, owned by the Grand Marnier family, and **Neyen**, boasting cabernet sauvignon vines dating back to 1889. We visit **Viña Apaltagua**, a vineyard with a focus on sustainability, and **Viña Ventisquero**, a brand creating avant-garde blends including their malted wine, which tastes like beer. →

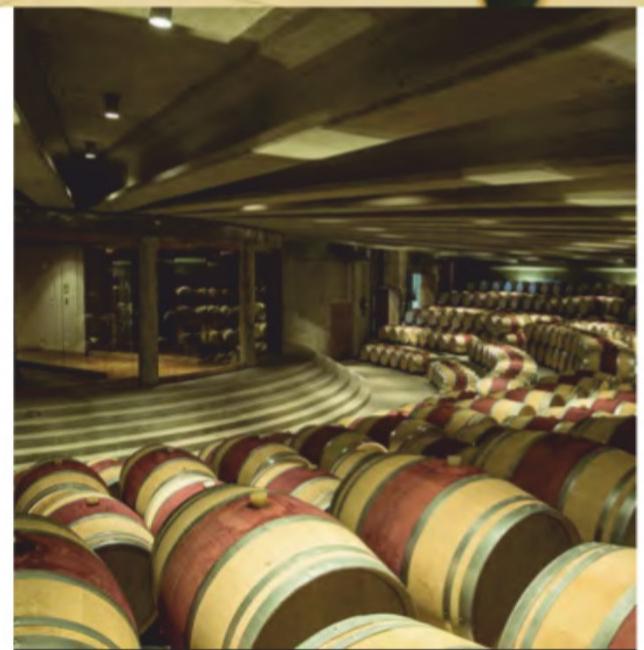


Just in case we hadn't yet experienced true culinary brilliance in Chile, Francesco takes us to lunch at **Fuegos de Apalta**. Enjoying a prime position among the vines at **Montes Winery**, and helmed by world-famous chef Francis Mallmann, the glass-walled restaurant is something truly special. The view is breathtaking and the seasonal menu, which is themed around cooking with fire, sweeps us off our feet.

Locally sourced meat, fish and vegetables are cooked on three types of open fires, heated by burning wood. The most visually impressive is the dome-shaped parilla fire-pit positioned at the centre of the restaurant, which smokes, bakes and grills ingredients before a captivated audience of diners.

We feast on an entrée plate of sweetbreads with a fresh tomato, peach and celery salad followed by a grilled rib-eye steak, served with hanging cabbage cooked in the fire-pit, chimichurri and domino potatoes for main course. The wine of the moment is a bottle of Montes' Purple Angel Carmenère Petit Verdot.

As we breathe in the aroma of roasting wood and gaze at the vines (only metres away) that gave birth to the wine in our glasses, one question comes to mind. In fact, the only serious question a couple on a gourmet escape in Chile need ask each other: where to eat next? **H**



(Top) The wine regions of Chile are some of the most beautiful in the world. (Above) The incredible Montes cellar. (Below) An entree of sweetbreads at Fuegos de Apalta. (Left) Tour the Viu Manent winery on a horse-drawn carriage. (Opposite page, from top) Wines served at the Neyen cellar come from heritage vines; Vina Ventisquero.





“The Colchagua wine trail, little known for many years, has enjoyed a recent surge in popularity”



The Details

DRIVING

Driving throughout the narrow expanse of Chile is quite easy. Locals drive on the right-hand side of the road and speed limits are in the metric system. Speed limits on the freeways we took were marked at 130km per hour. Rental cars are available in both automatic and manual transmissions.

VISAS

Australian passport holders can holiday in Chile for up to 90 days without a visa. Just pay a one-off reciprocity fee upon arrival, which remains valid for multiple entries into Chile.

WEATHER

The fact that Chile spans three continents and has seven major climates means there is always a season to suit. However, to spend your days basking in Mediterranean-style sunshine on a vineyard estate or on a city rooftop, visit Santa Cruz or Santiago in summer (December to February).

LANGUAGE

Chile is a Spanish-speaking country and it's estimated that less than 10 per cent of the population speaks English, so brush up on your Spanish before you go.

BEST TIME TO VISIT COLCHAGUA VALLEY

The warmer months of October to February are the most popular for tourists who want to see the vines (harvest is usually in March) while June through to August (winter) is best for ski-loving foodies.

WINE TOURS IN COLCHAGUA

High season in Colchagua Valley runs between November and April. So, it's highly recommended you book wine tours well in advance for this time. Most wineries also have set wine tour hours so it's essential for visitors to plan the day accordingly to make the most of the experience. Only a handful of wineries offer wine by the glass and it may be for a small fee.

BOOKING AT BORAGÓ

Reservations at **Boragó** are essential. If you're planning to include the famous restaurant on your itinerary, be sure to reserve a table a few months in advance to be safe.

TAXIS IN CHILE

Pre-book your taxi where possible. **Colchagua Wine Tours** also advised us to have small bills on hand and ask the driver to turn on their light when you pay them. Apparently a small number of unscrupulous drivers will drop people off on busy streets and in the confusion, may exchange incorrect bills (the old switcheroo).

FOOD IN SANTA CRUZ

If you want to sample a range of international dishes created with local produce in Santa Cruz, there are several restaurants to choose from. Try **La Casita de Barreales** for Peruvian, **Ristorante Vino Bello** and **La Famiglia de Santis** for Italian, and **Casa Colchagua** and **Rayuela Wine and Grill** for traditional Chilean fare.

WEBSITES TO KNOW

solacehotel.cl; borago.cl; cavacolchagua.cl; colchaguawinetours.com; lapostollewines.com; neyen.cl; apaltagua.com; vinaventisquero.com; monteswines.com



PHOTOS: GTI TOURISM; SERNATUR COURTESY OF VISIT CHILE
YASMIN NOONE



PHOTO : ADOBE STOCK/DMITRY RUKHLENKO

HONG KONG HEROES

Navigate your way through the dizzying array of Hong Kong attractions with our editor, **Tanya Joslin**, who recently took a deep dive into the food-obsessed culture of this big-city gourmet destination





The Mandarin Oriental's fine-diner, **Man Wah**, is a feast for the senses with sweeping views of Victoria Harbour and a Michelin-starred menu of Cantonese favourites.

Fast-paced, culturally vibrant and totally addictive, Hong Kong has a chameleon spirit all its own. English is widely understood, if not widely spoken, making it an accessible destination for Australians – yet it remains an undeniably exotic experience. From the thriving working-class suburbs that prove the old Hong Kong is alive and well, to the heady mix of luxury hotels, Michelin-starred restaurants and bustling street food stalls, to a refreshing and breathtaking hike through the mountains, a week in Hong Kong can deliver a whirlwind of vastly different experiences. Dig in.

Savour

Eating is *everything* in Hong Kong, with the city's flourishing cocktail scene a perfect complement. Quality street food comes cheap, so be adventurous! But, if your tastes tend more towards the refined, Hong Kong will deliver with plenty of hot restaurants and bars to sample.

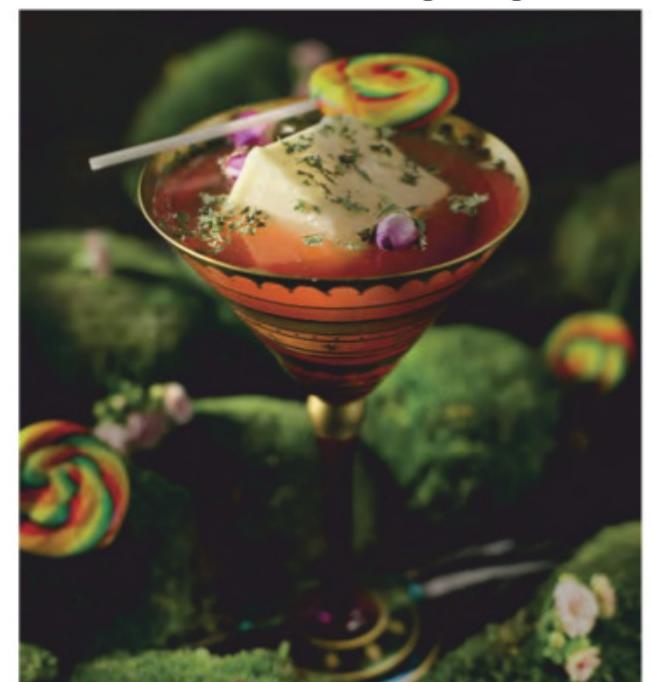
An instant classic when it opened in 1963, the Mandarin Oriental is woven into the city's history. Located on the 25th floor, its flagship restaurant, **Man Wah**, captures incredible Victoria Harbour views and offers an outstanding Michelin-starred Cantonese menu of traditional favourites and seasonal specials, paired with slick and attentive service. The design is spectacular: think traditional rosewood furniture, floating gold-plated lanterns, and silk art on the walls. The space itself (and those views!) help make it one of Hong Kong's most romantic dining destinations – but it's the food that takes Man Wah next level: a legendary dining experience.

Billed as a "Cantonese grill and dim sum" inspired by historic spice and trade routes, **John Anthony** is a triumph of East meets West meets sustainable design. Located in Causeway Bay, the richly evocative interiors feature reclaimed Chinese terracotta flooring, bamboo fixtures, hand-dyed fabrics and hand-woven wickers – we adored the eye-catching illustrations printed

onto the tiles of the private dining rooms. And then there's the food. It's innovative, ethical and utterly delicious. The slow-cooked Australian wagyu beef cheek with watermelon and fragrant chilli sauce is an excellent example of how the chefs here are pushing the boundaries.

Ho Lee Fook serves up funky Chinese dishes in a busy underground restaurant just off Hollywood Road. The atmosphere is edgy, loud and fun – we should have known it would be a good night with such a cheeky name (it translates from Cantonese as 'good fortune for your mouth')! The menu is intriguing (think modern Cantonese comfort food with international influences) and the dishes delicious. Don't go past the prawn toast with shaved cabbage, and the signature wagyu short ribs with a soy glaze. Ho Lee Fook is also perfectly positioned to soak up Hong Kong's dazzling bar scene, including the popular Lan Kwai Fong area, after your meal.

Head to the Kowloon side of the harbour to experience **Ming Court**, the Michelin-starred



(Above left, above and below) A meal at Ming Court is guaranteed to be a magical dining experience. (Above right) Quinary's cocktails are listed among the world's best. (Far left and bottom) Dragonfly's fanciful decor is as much a draw as its food and cocktails.



Cantonese restaurant housed in the Cordis hotel. Wine-lovers will swoon over the cellar alone, which boasts over 400 wines from 100 regions to complement the exquisite meals that have garnered Ming Court endless kudos over the years. The food is best described as a unique take on traditional classics – the layered silk tofu was almost too beautiful to eat, while the chilled suckling pig and barbecued pork were juicy and succulent, and the bamboo shoot shrimp dumplings were divine. The elegant decor adds an aura of heritage to the meal, with a collection of Ming Dynasty bronzes and antiques ensuring the experience is as much a feast for the eyes as it is for the tastebuds.

The Hong Kong bar scene is the stuff of modern legend, and we started our bar-hopping at one of the coolest establishments around. “Quinary is to cocktails what Spain’s El Bulli restaurant is to food, playing with perception, flavour and science to create a pioneering and exciting experience,” enthuses the World’s Best Bars website. High praise, indeed – but spot on! Situated on buzzing Hollywood Road with one of the city’s most celebrated cocktail experts, Antonio Lai, at the helm, this is a serious cocktail bar where all five senses are indulged, with quirky, inventive signature cocktails and some seriously ’grammable drinks. Regularly placing in the World’s 50 Best Bars and Asia’s 50 Best Bars awards, the ‘multisensory mixology’ of **Quinary** is a must.

And then there’s **Dragonfly**, one incredibly beautiful flight of fancy, with spectacular interiors inspired by the 19th-century American artist Louis Tiffany, best known for his work with stained glass. Dragonfly’s decor is opulent and unconventional: the ceiling is filled with rich turquoise Tiffany stained-glass lamps, and more than 500 cast-iron dragonflies adorn the bar area. Imagine being inside a treasure box, taking in one fantastical detail after another, then add an imaginative menu of cocktails and bar snacks to tempt you to linger even longer. We discovered this in the new Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage and Arts (more on that later). →



Experience

If you've never been to Hong Kong, or it's a few years between visits, you'll want to include the usual highlights, including **The Peak**, where you'll soak up incredible views over the city and harbour, the popular **Man Mo Temple** on Hollywood Road, and the serenely majestic 34-metre **Big Buddha (Tian Tan)** on Lantau Island. However, we added a few extras to our itinerary and they proved to be some of our most memorable experiences.

Step back in time on a walking tour of Sham Shui Po, which has long been a working-class district. Today this humble area is one of the city's hidden gems, and a must-see is the **Mei Ho House Museum** for a glimpse into the Hong Kong of yesteryear and the site of its first public housing estate. This area has a dramatic back story of Chinese refugees fleeing Communist rule, their sprawling shantytown which was consumed by the city's most devastating fire, and a government response that created a revolution in multi-level, low-cost housing in the city.

We were lucky to have local expert Olivia Tang Yiu-sum from **Walk In Hong Kong** to guide us through the museum and on to a neighbourhood food tour, starting with a bowl of tofu (naturally!) at legendary **Kung Wo Tofu**, which opened in 1853, and where they still prepare the tofu fresh each morning. Dumplings, rice rolls and even snake soup were on the menu as we wove our way through Sham Shui Po's bustling streets. You could easily spend half a day here exploring the local haunts and soaking up the sounds, smells and atmosphere



(Above) Get to grips with this layered and complex city with a walking tour of working-class district Sham Shui Po (Below and below left) Prepare for sensory overload wherever you go in Hong Kong, from the aroma of incredible street food to the noise and colour of the many bustling local markets.



(Above) The natural beauty of Sai Kung is a lovely complement to Hong Kong's urban areas. (Right) The bright Man Fung and Kam Ning buildings are a Sham Shui Po highlight. (Below) The cultural hub that is Tai Kwun Centre was once a city police station and prison.

of a Hong Kong invisible to many visitors.

Hong Kong's magical Victoria Harbour is legendary, and most romantic after dark. We marvelled at the neon-lit skyline and the city's dazzling Symphony of Lights laser light show with a cocktail in hand on an **Aqua Luna** evening cruise. Inspired by ancient Chinese sailing vessels called 'junks' and handcrafted in timber, the Aqua Lunar ships offer a fitting introduction to this fabulous destination. Look for the iconic red sails, a nod to Hong Kong's rich maritime past. During the day, cross the harbour on a **Star Ferry** – one of the cheapest and fastest ways to explore.

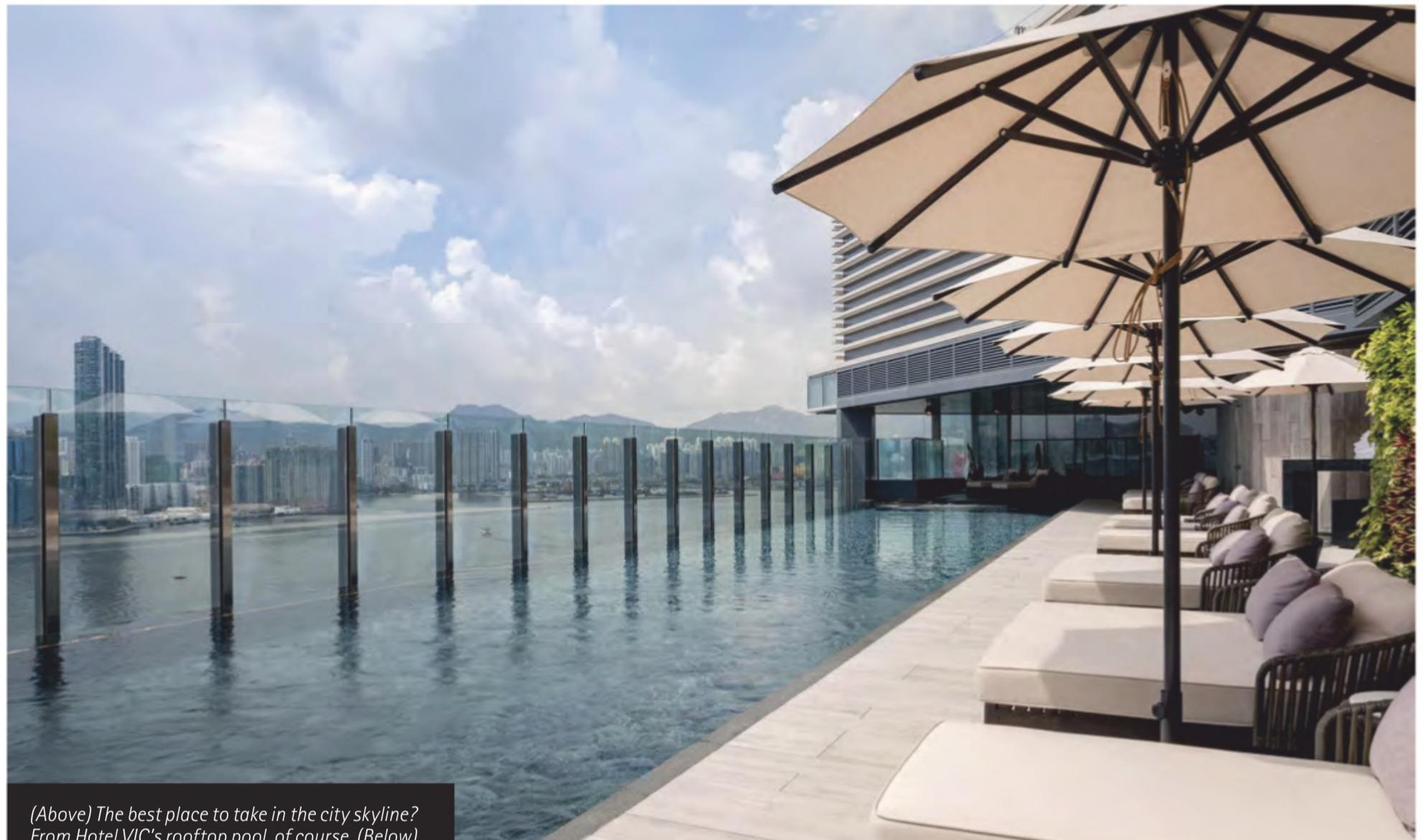
To take a fresh look at HK, head to Sai Kung, dubbed the 'back garden of Hong Kong', and where the more serene natural beauty of this bustling city awaits. Famous for its seafood restaurants, fishing villages, nature trails and access to beaches and islands few would imagine existing here, Sai Kung is around 30 minutes from the city via taxi (don't worry, taxis are cheap). We ate and drank a lot on this trip, so a day spent hiking and taking in leafy vistas before indulging (again!) in freshly caught seafood at one of the local restaurants lining



the promenade in town was a lovely contrast. If you're serious about hiking, Hong Kong Tourism's website is an excellent place to find the perfect trail to explore.

Locals and visitors alike can enjoy the new artistic heartland at the **Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage & Arts**, Hong Kong's most significant revitalisation project to date. What was once the city's Central Police Station – complete with prison blocks – is now a gift to the Hong Kong community and its many visitors.

In such a densely populated city, where it seems a new skyscraper goes up every other day, it's extraordinary to think this cultural gem lies in central Hong Kong. Enjoying an entire city block, 16 heritage buildings and two brand-new buildings house a rich rotation of exhibitions, artistic performances and education programs. Enjoy a free tour then eat and drink your way through the centre's imaginative restaurants and bars. **Dragonfly** was our favourite (it's just so pretty!) but **Behind Bars** scores points for its creative setting, found within a series of old prison cells and now happily lit in bright neon colours. You can't miss the waiters, kitted out in orange prison overalls. →



(Above) The best place to take in the city skyline? From Hotel VIC's rooftop pool, of course. (Below) The new hotel offers panoramic views of the harbour from every room, plus high-tech perks such as a virtual reality workout.

Stay

When it comes time for the snooze portion of your 'eat, sleep, repeat' Hong Kong experience, there are two main areas to choose from – Hong Kong Island or the Kowloon Peninsula to the north, just across Victoria Harbour. Of course, spend enough time in either and you'll discover myriad distinct districts within (and a wide range of superb accommodation) but rather than choose a side we divided our time between both – and highly recommend this tactic!

Part of a vibrant new, mixed-use development at North Point, **Hotel VIC** on Hong Kong Island offers a stylish and – for Hong Kong – relatively affordable five-star option. With 671 contemporary rooms across two towers, this is one of the few hotels in Hong Kong where every room boasts harbour views. Convenience is prioritised here, with online check-in/check-out, a bespoke app connecting you to hotel services, and a 24-hour gym (look out for the virtual reality fitness flying machine, promising to help you burn 30% more calories!). But the real stars of the show are the Hong Kong harbour and skyline, with expansive views on offer throughout the hotel, including from the gym and rooftop pool.

North Point is Hong Kong's 'newly fashionable' shopping and dining district, six stops after Central on the speedy MTR.



Minutes' walk from the North Point MTR station, and just steps from the ferry terminal, guests have easy access to all of Hong Kong. The hotel even offers a shuttle bus to Hong Kong Island's main shopping and business districts. A personal highlight was hitting the streets each morning for my daily walk. Stepping out into the neighbourhood as shops were taking delivery of fresh produce and residents were rushing to work, I felt a sense of local life in this dynamic metropolis. Not far from the hotel are the famous **Chun Yeung Street markets**.

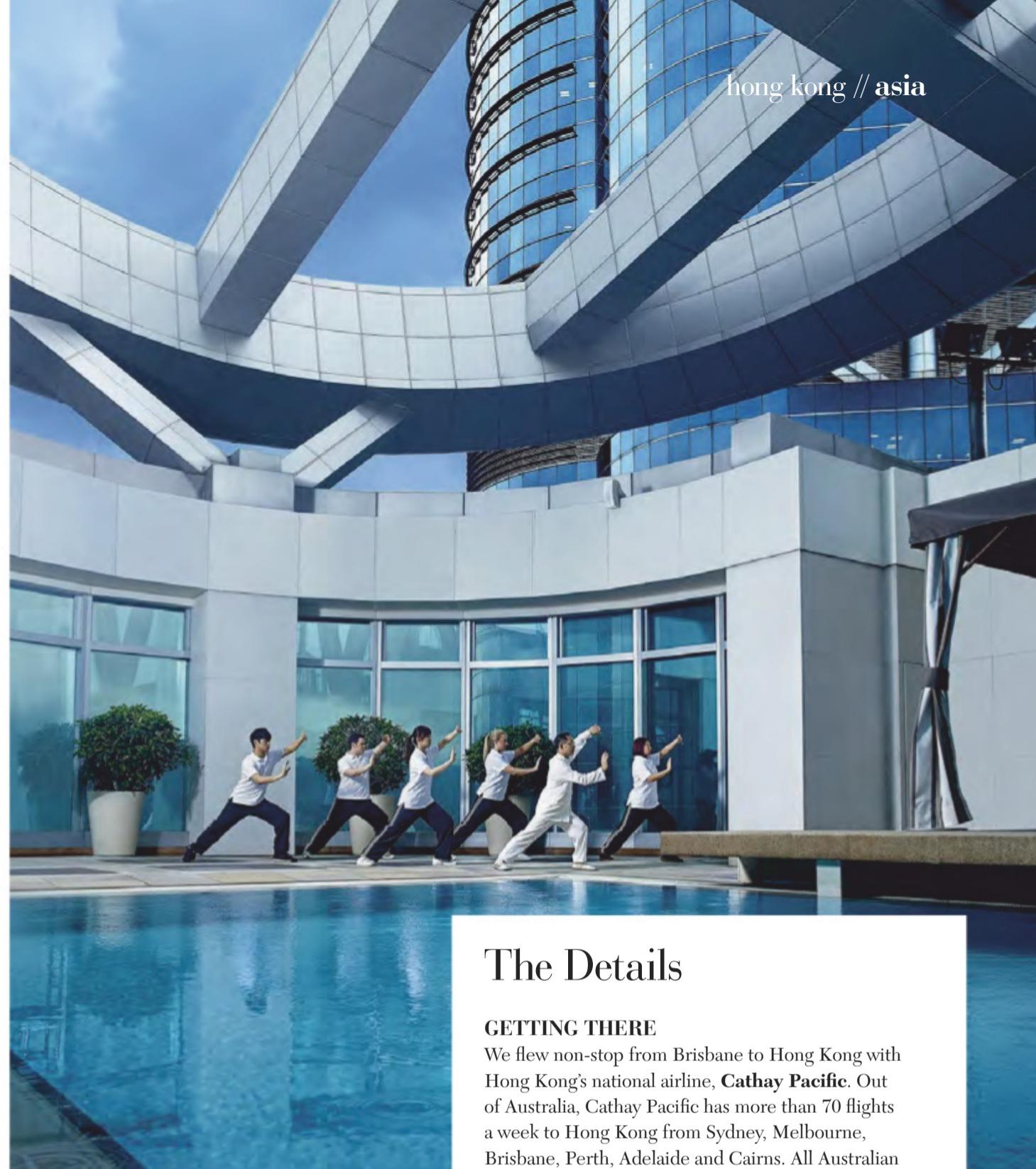
As one of the city's earliest wet markets, they offer a fantastic glimpse into old-school Hong Kong. The streets are lined with stores selling everything from live seafood to fruit and vegetables and various cuts of meat, and the streets are busy with locals stocking up for the day's meals (weekends can be incredibly hectic so go during the week if you can).

Mong Kok translates to 'busy corner' in the local Cantonese language, which is completely appropriate for this vibrant, neon-lit area. Perhaps Hong Kong's liveliest (and certainly

most crowded) areas, Mong Kok is a major shopping district on the Kowloon side. From the huge 15-storey shopping complex **Langham Place** to some of Hong Kong's most beloved traditional markets – including the **Ladies, Flower, Jade and Bird markets** – and plenty of street food stalls, Mong Kok is Asia on steroids and, at times, a sensory overload.

Cue your sanctuary in Mong Kok: the five-star **Cordis** hotel. The location is unbeatable – connected to Langham Place and surrounded by the markets mentioned above, everything is at your fingertips. A pair of sculptor Jiang Shuo's enormous bronze Red Guards are on hand to welcome you, just two of the 1,500 pieces of mostly Chinese contemporary art throughout the building. Rooms are elegant and modern with mesmerising views of the city or South China Sea. We splurged on a Club room for access to the fabulous Club floor, where breakfast, snacks and afternoon tea are served and a dedicated Club team is ready to assist with all your Hong Kong questions.

The hotel's tai chi lesson, offered daily at the pool on the 42nd floor, was unexpectedly memorable. This was a different way to experience the local culture, beyond food and markets, with the meaning behind the moves explained by the ever-patient resident tai chi master, Master Cheung. We also enjoyed sampling the popular local street foods on one of the hotel's complimentary daily walking tours. Although the Cordis is home to some stellar dining spots, including the Michelin-starred Ming Palace, the neighbourhood eats deserve to be devoured, too. **H**



(Above) Stay at the Cordis and you can take part in daily tai chi classes with the hotel's resident master. (Below) Soak up the impressive views and unwind from the bustle of Kowloon in the hotel's elegant yet contemporary rooms.

The Details

GETTING THERE

We flew non-stop from Brisbane to Hong Kong with Hong Kong's national airline, **Cathay Pacific**. Out of Australia, Cathay Pacific has more than 70 flights a week to Hong Kong from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Cairns. All Australian flights offer three classes of travel – business class, premium economy class and economy class – providing excellent, award-winning levels of service to both the business and leisure traveller. cathaypacific.com

WHERE TO STAY

On Hong Kong Island we stayed at **Hotel VIC**. On the Kowloon side, we stayed at **Cordis Hong Kong**.

WEBSITES TO KNOW

diningconcepts.com; discoverhongkong.com; holeefook.com.hk; johnanthony.hk; mandarinoriental.com; quinary.hk; hotelvic.com; cordishotels.com; walkin.hk; discoverhongkong.com

DON'T MISS

The **CCB (Asia) Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival** brings together world-class food, drinks and entertainment with the stunning Victoria Harbour skyline as its backdrop. Visit the **Hong Kong Tourism** website for updated 2019 dates closer to your trip.

Walk in Hong Kong tours offer an incredible array of walking tours in addition to Sham Shui Po, from LGBT in the City to a Market Hopping Food Tour.

Download the **My Hong Kong Guide** by Hong Kong Tourism Board before going. This all-in-one app allows you to create customised guides from 1,800 activities and attractions, get trip ideas from other travellers, share your experiences on social media, and more. discoverhongkong.com/eng/myhkguide

The writer travelled as a guest of Hong Kong Tourism Board.



CAPTIVATING M a d r i d

Spain's capital may be rich in cultural treasures, but it's the fabulous food and wine experiences that will leave you wanting more, discovers **Rhonda Bannister**







It's late spring, but the weather is miserably cold and wet when our taxi drops us at the end of the one-way street where our apartment is located, close to the Gran Via, one of Madrid's most iconic avenues. People scurry past, umbrellas held tight and coats buttoned from collar to hem as protection from the inclement weather. We stand, sans umbrella, dripping wet and exhausted after our long flight via Hong Kong. All I want is a hot shower but we can't seem to decipher the secret code of entry.

We had expected warm weather but instead received a warm welcome from a passing stranger who spoke little English, but who nevertheless walked us a half-block to reveal the entrance to our building. That generous affability from the locals was particularly beneficial in the coming days as we wandered around the city, mostly lost but not caring.

Madrid is Europe's capital of cool, radiating a seductive energy from every fountain-clad plaza, twisting cobbled street and tree-lined boulevard. One of the most captivating things about the city, besides the elegant, classic

Spanish architecture, is its incredible food and wine scene. It's so good you'll want to sample every variety of tasty tapas and tipple every luscious Spanish wine as you make your way through the bars and cafes tucked away in a maze of medieval laneways. And because Madrid is a city built for walking, it's easy to immerse in the lifestyle and still have time to enjoy the fantastic cultural treasures.

We had only five days to get a handle on a city that's so full of life the energy seems to vibrate in waves around you, but the first thing we had to get straight was the clock. Forget time as you know it in Australia, and get used to eating breakfast mid-morning, lunch mid-afternoon, early evening tapas, and dinner around 10 – with head-hitting-pillow around two-ish. The Spanish sure know how to make the most of Father Time!

We began each morning just like any true Madrileño, with *churros con chocolate* – strips of fried-dough pastry dusted with sugar and cinnamon and served with a cup of thick, velvety hot chocolate. Then we'd hit the pavement to find a new *barrio* (Madrid's





(Above) Cosy bars, like the famous Cervecería La Mayor, abound in Madrid's barrios. (Below left) Tapas is typically served with beer or vermouth. (Below right) Churros con chocolate makes an indulgent breakfast. (Opposite page, from top) Elegant architecture; the bustling Gran Vía.

“Madrid’s way of life is enviable: lively yet laidback, with an easy abundance of delicious dining opportunities”

inner-city neighbourhoods) to soak up the atmosphere and explore the local shops, bars, cafes and food markets.

Madrid’s way of life is enviable: lively yet laidback, with an easy abundance of delicious dining opportunities. Cafes, bars and restaurants line just about every street, and at lunchtime and early evening they’re packed with locals and visitors alike. We walked, we ate, we drank, and then we walked some more, stopping off in atmospheric bars in whatever neighbourhood we found ourselves for our daily fix of *vermut de grifo* – vermouth poured on tap from big stainless-steel barrels and served up with dainty morsels of food.

Tapas is a fundamental part of dining in Spain, but it can be daunting to stand at the bar in front of the chalkboard menu with no idea whether you’re about to order meatballs or bull’s balls. So, our top tip is to book a food walking tour with a company like **Devour Madrid** to gain some insider knowledge. We did their **Huertas Neighbourhood Food & Market Tour**, and by the time it finished we felt right at home, squeezed up at the bar eating tapas and tostas while tossing back glasses of vermouth amid the lunchtime noise and chaos.

In Madrid, you’re served free tapas when you order a drink – usually something simple like potato chips, potato salad with mayonnaise, olives or even a slice of ham on bread. This →





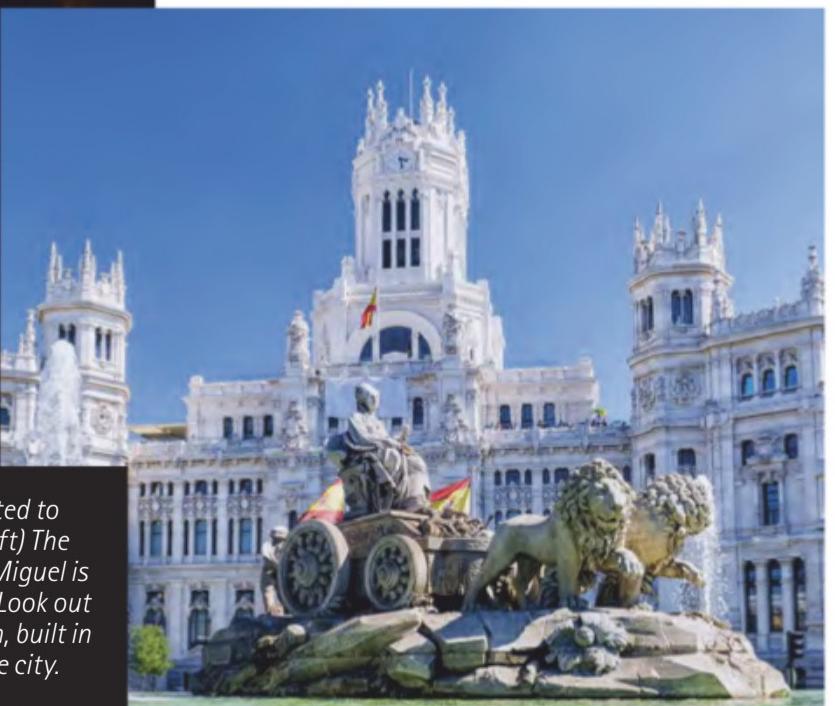
(Above) A tapas bar dedicated to jamon in central Madrid. (Left) The century-old Mercado de San Miguel is a food-lover's dream. (Right) Look out for the ornate Cibeles fountain, built in 1782 and now an icon of the city.

generous hospitality is unique to the capital; in other Spanish cities you will need to pay.

In a city as food-focused as Madrid, there's no shortage of fantastic food markets, but the one you must not miss is the gorgeously ornate, 100-year-old **Mercado de San Miguel**, one of the most vibrant spots in the city, selling produce from every part of Spain. Pull up a stool at any number of tapas bars to sample regional delicacies such as *pulpo a la gallega* (marinated octopus, a specialty from Galicia), *berenjenas con miel* (fried eggplant with honey) or an all-time favourite, the classic *gambas al ajillo* (garlic prawns).

On our last day we decided we couldn't leave without visiting at least one museum, so we headed off to Paseo del Arte – a one-kilometre stretch also known as the 'Golden Triangle of Art' that's home to three of the best museums in the world: the Prado, the Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Reina Sofía. We chose the **Prado Museum** as it's considered to have one of the world's finest collections of pre-20th century European art (something we don't see a lot of in Australia), and it's fantastic. If you go, don't miss the amazing *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, a mammoth triptych by 15th-century Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch. This surreal depiction of heaven and hell is chilling.

Intent on leaving on a high note, we morphed day into night by hitting a few tapas bars and jazz clubs before slipping into the legendary cocktail bar **Museo Chicote** for one of their famous cocktails. There, we raised a glass in farewell to this intoxicating city – and I mean





“Madrid is Europe’s capital of cool, radiating a seductive energy from every fountain-clad plaza”

(Above) The impressive Plaza Mayor de Madrid is a popular public space.

Linger here to enjoy the city's specialty: a calamari sandwich.

(Below) This decorative facade found in the Plaza Mayor features characters from Spanish mythology.



that in more ways than one! Chicote is one of the city's oldest bars, and during the mid 20th century everyone who was anyone (and all the wannabes) would hang out to see and be seen. It's where Hollywood stars Ava Gardner and Frank Sinatra used to drink and fight until the early hours in the 1950s, and where American author Ernest Hemingway sheltered from bombs during the Spanish Civil War.

Ava, who lived in Madrid for many years, said she loved Spain because it was a lot like her: violent, rural and whimsical, while Hemingway called Madrid “the most Spanish of all cities”. And this, my friends, is exactly why we loved every crazy minute here. 

The Details

GETTING AROUND

Spain is serviced by a high-speed train network connecting main cities in a few hours. We booked our tickets in Australia through **RailEurope** (raileurope.com.au) well in advance to get the best price and travelled from Madrid to Malaga, Cordoba, Seville, Barcelona and onto Paris in comfort and without the hassles of airports.

Madrid's neighbourhoods each have their own charm and easily connect by foot or by the city's efficient Metro.

TOP TIP

Book a **Food & Culture Tour** – it's a delightful way to immerse in the culture of the city. madridfoodtour.com



Relax, Luxury, Rainforest.

Seclusion, privacy and an exquisite natural backdrop make Crystal Creek Rainforest Retreat the ideal setting for a weekend escape, a romantic getaway or honeymoon. Nestled at the base of the World Heritage Listed Springbrook National Park, on the NSW/QLD border are just 13 luxurious private cabins, bungalows and lodges hidden amongst 250 acres of stunning rainforest. Each bungalow contains a king-sized bed, fully equipped kitchen, stereo and a luxurious double spa bath or solid marble bath overlooking the rainforest.



the
M E L L O W
Y E W L O W
c o a s t

Local **Craig Tansley** reveals
why the Gold Coast has
become one of the most
romantic hang-outs in Australia



(Left) The Gold Coast's cool kids flock to Komune in Coolangatta. (Below) The Village Markets at Burleigh Heads captures the mood of the new Gold Coast.



“All the excess the Gold Coast was famous for has receded ... There’s a subtlety about the region that’s one part boho, one part romantic isolation (among the high rises)”

It's seven o'clock and the last surfers of the day are paddling past us in the dark. The waves they've been riding at Burleigh Point are washing in around the tables here at the Gold Coast's most lauded dining establishment, Rick Shores. The tide peaks at 7.11pm; if we can get through the next 20 minutes, our shoes should stay dry. The maître d' says they're ready for anything; guests can move to a higher table if they're squeamish. Though none of the couples seated along the sea's edge look the least bit concerned. They're distracted by the Moreton Bay bug rolls, the spiced mackerel with white radish kimchi, and the gentle glow of the three-quarter moon rising fast over the ocean.

The Gold Coast has undergone a bohemian kind of metamorphosis these past few years. There's an effortlessly casual chic about the place (and Burleigh's at the centre of it) that feels more than a little Melbourne-esque. Here at **Rick Shores** we sit at a bar as couples take their places between potted birds of paradise and under an art-deco chandelier. Just across the road from us at **The Fish House**, couples

sit beside white timber louvre windows folded back to welcome in the breeze. In the town itself – past the lorikeets shrieking in the pine trees of a sprawling beachside park – tiny laneways lead to new cafes, bars and restaurants you have to know about to find. Like **Iku Yakitori** (just try spotting its entrance) where, when we finally get in through a small wooden doorway off a back lane beside two speakeasy-style bars, we're transported to a moody bar/restaurant where Japanese chefs cook over hot charcoal.

All the look-at-me excess the Gold Coast was famous for has receded now... or at the very least, it's confined to Surfers Paradise. There's a subtlety about the region that's one part boho, and one part romantic isolation (among the high-rises). In suburbs including Nobby Beach, Mermaid Beach and Miami couples spend evenings in the sorts of places (like game-changing Gold Coast dining institution **Hellenika**) where dining's just as much about being there as anything that's on the menu.

I moved back to the Gold Coast last year after 20 years away, and I don't recognise the place. For all its natural beauty (52 kilometres



(Left) Enjoy food trucks and the cool community vibe at The Green Marquee in Currumbin Valley. (Above) The Collective Palm Beach combines great food and cocktails in a trendy boho-luxe space complete with rooftop bar.

of beaches, and a hinterland spread around the rim of an extinct volcano – the southern hemisphere's largest) there was always something a little vacuous about the region. But now the coast offers more for couples than just a lot of sand and water.

I'm surprised so many visitors still think the Gold Coast's all about Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach... and Coolangatta. That's to miss the point of being here entirely; for it's the Gold Coast's hidden secrets that make this region special, and romantic. If you find others on the beach here, keep on driving. Take an early morning walk through the 27-hectare national park on Burleigh Headland and you'll find secluded beaches along Tallebudgera Creek where few venture. Only seven minutes drive south, hire a stand-up paddleboard on a creek (Currumbin) which winds its way from the sea for 24 kilometres into the hinterland. We like to paddle past cafes set beside sprawling fig trees by the bank (look out for **The Boatshed**) to where the creek meets the ocean. Here the water's as blue as a Polynesian lagoon. We live just above this entrance: some mornings

dolphins venture in to fish. Or if you're here between July and October, paddle a little further out and you'll see the humpbacks passing by close to shore. If you prefer long open beaches with no one on them, there's never a soul on the seven-kilometre stretch between Currumbin and Kirra. Or the five-kilometre stretch north to Tallebudgera Creek and Burleigh Heads.

For all its charm, Currumbin's still the Gold Coast's best-kept secret. While hundreds congregate on the beach at iconic surf spot The Alley, few go beyond. A kilometre inland, there's a newly emerging arts precinct set in an industrial estate (Currumbin Waters). Check out the best local artists and musicians at funky gallery/cafes such as **Dust Temple**. The Gold Coast is making a habit of converting its industrial spaces into cultural hot-spots – especially in suburbs like Miami where, wedged between mechanic workshops, craft brewing companies (**Lost Palms Brewery**), vegan eateries (**The LC** and **Greenhouse Canteen**) and **The Miami Marketta** have changed the social scene for visitors. Three nights a week, the best live acts on the coast converge on a →

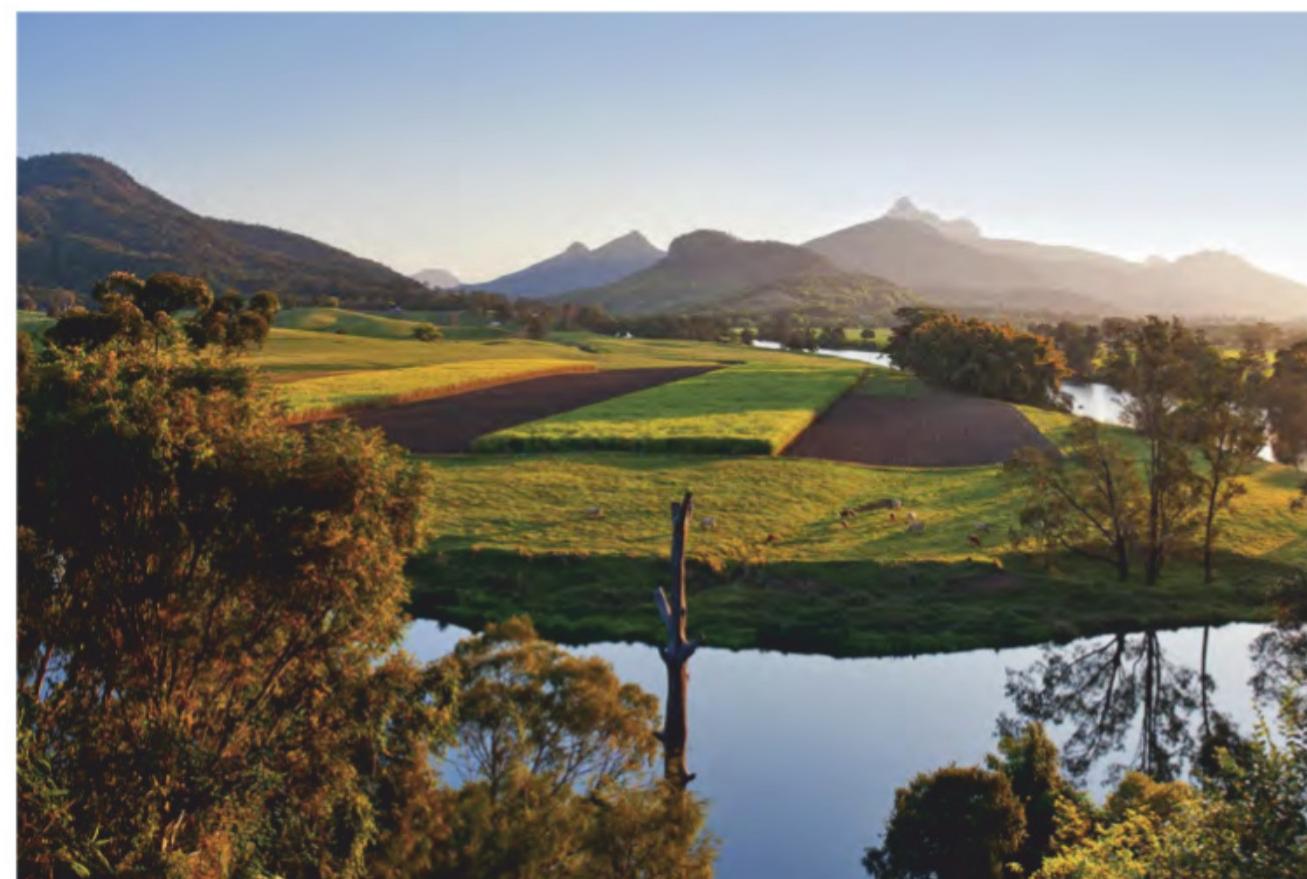


huge converted warehouse (at the Marketta) to play while visitors choose from a buffet of food trucks offering cuisine from around the world. Beside us here, artists, antique furniture dealers, designers and potters trade their wares.

But keep driving west from Currumbin Waters to the Currumbin Valley, Queensland's best hideaway location (psst, don't tell anyone). When we can drag ourselves from the beach, we only need drive 15 minutes to where the mountains rise along the rim of the extinct Tweed Volcano. The hinterland this volcano created when it erupted 22 million years ago is as significant to the Gold Coast as its beaches. Out here you'll find the largest tracts of subtropical rainforest left in Australia in World Heritage-listed national parks – also home to some of Australia's most romantic retreats. We sleep deep in the forest in safari-style luxury tents at **Nightfall**, while the views from the bath tub in a room cantilevered onto the edge of a mountainside inside the Sky Lodges at **Binna Burra Lodge** render bush walking anti-climactic.

Couples needn't venture beyond Currumbin's lush hinterland for entertainment. We spend entire weekends swimming in natural rock pools by the roadside, or within the Mount Cougal section of the Springbrook National Park (at the Valley's end), and eating at organic fruit stalls and farms with their cosy cafes and musicians playing favourite old tunes, perched out along the escarpments (try **Freemans Organic Farm, Currumbin Valley Harvest** and the **Currumbin Valley Eco Village**). **H**

"The hinterland the Tweed Volcano created when it erupted 22 million years ago is as significant to the Gold Coast as its beaches"





The Details

TOP TIP:

Avoid school holidays. The Gold Coast is popular with families so accommodation is limited and often doubles in price during these peak times.

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL:

The months of autumn and spring are best, though temperatures rarely drop below 20 degrees even in winter (neither does the water temperature).

GETTING THERE:

Jetstar, Virgin Australia and Qantas all fly daily to the Gold Coast from Sydney and Melbourne. All major hire-car companies operate from the airport.

WEBSITES TO KNOW:

rickshores.com.au; thefishhouse.com.au; ikuyakitoribar.com.au; hellenika.com.au; theboatshedcurrumbin.com; dusttemple.com.au; greenhousecanteen.com; miamimarketta.com; instagram.com/thelc_miami; lostpalms.com.au; nightfall.com.au; binnaburralodge.com.au; freemansorganicfarm.com.au; currumbinvalleyharvest.com.au; theecovillage.com.au, destinationgoldcoast.com



(Clockwise from top left) The hinterland offers a completely different experience to the coast. A vegan feast at Miami's Greenhouse Canteen. Cool down in the ancient sub-tropical rainforest; Venture south to rural Murwillumbah for more romantic vistas.





Heaven on earth

With such alluring scenery and exciting experiences, it's no wonder the Whitsundays is a world-famous destination. Welcome to paradise

It's long been a go-to for romantic getaways and dream honeymoons, but the Whitsundays is *really* having a moment right now. With more travellers returning to its sun-kissed isles and pristine beaches lately, this Queensland gem is hot on the travel radar. And whether you're seasoned regulars or newcomers, there's plenty to fulfil your tropical escape daydreams.

After touching down in Whitsunday Coast (Proserpine) Airport, kick your getaway off to the right start with a few days in beautiful Airlie Beach. A winner for postcard-perfect beaches, stylish dining spots, thrilling adventures and luxurious accommodation, this blissfully laid-back spot doesn't disappoint. Share a super-fresh seafood tower at Northerlies Beach Bar and Grill, toast the occasion at Coral Sea Resort's Clipper Restaurant & Bar, take in soul-stirring views with a scenic flight over the nearby Great Barrier Reef, enjoy a jetski 'Ride to Paradise' experience or just relax by Airlie Beach's Lagoon in the centre of town to get yourselves in holiday-mode.

Chances are you're going to want to visit the Whitsundays' islands while in the region

(and we don't blame you). With arguably some of the world's most picture-perfect isles at your fingertips, couples are spoilt for enticing options. For straight-from-a-screensaver scenery, beloved Whitsunday Island is clear favourite. Home to famous Whitehaven Beach (a regular inclusion on 'World's best beaches' lists), it's also where you'll find the spectacular Hill Inlet Lookout – do not miss.

If a cosmopolitan escape is more your style, Hamilton Island promises plenty of enchantment. Known for its vast array of coastal dining spots (don't leave without visiting Bommie Restaurant for a glamorous dinner), sumptuous stays and sunset cruising experiences, it's where stunning nature and sophistication meets. Want more? Book into the newly refurbished Daydream Island or find your own piece of paradise with a private island getaway or discover seclusion at tranquil Palm Bay on Long Island. Choices, choices...

Not content to spend your time at just *one* heavenly location? Hop your way between the Whitsundays' smaller islands on an unforgettable bareboating cruise with one of the many local groups. From Hook Island's





many exquisite bays (Butterfly, Manta Ray and Luncheon are fabulous offerings) to Langford Island's long stretches of sugar-white sand, there are a slew of incredible spots to discover for yourselves. And you really should.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that a holiday in the Whitsundays was all about relaxing on its islands. As tempting as that is, don't leave without exploring its inland regions as well. With ruggedly romantic hinterland, whimsical rainforests and quaint country towns only a short drive from Airlie Beach, there's no shortage of marvellous experiences to be had.

A bit of an undiscovered oasis, Bowen (under an hour's drive north of Airlie Beach) has all the makings for a wonderful day-trip or loved-up escape. Blessed with one of Australia's best regional beaches, as voted by the public, it's a place where palm-fringed coastal spots sit amongst rocky outcrops and old-school country pubs. A chilled beer after a refreshing dip in the Coral Sea? Sounds like

the perfect day to us. Also worth a visit, the hinterland township of Collinsville is brimming with charm and classic Aussie character. Think 'outback getaway', just under an hour from Airlie Beach's sparkling shores.

Before you fly out, fit in time to check out Proserpine's natural playgrounds. Adventure-seekers, the spellbinding Cedar Creek Falls provides yet another magical swimming spot, while the nearby Conway National Park's rainforest will make you feel as if you've stepped into *Jurassic Park*. There aren't any dinosaurs to look out for here, though; just captivating outlooks and the occasional deserted beach.

Whether you're drawn to its reef-shrouded islands or its sensational inland landscapes, the Whitsundays should definitely be on your must-visit list. Pack a chic sunhat, leave your stresses behind and rediscover paradise...

// Tourism Whitsundays
info@tourismwhitsundays.com.au
tourismwhitsundays.com.au

WINE HUNTER

Discover a few of Australia's world-class wine regions, where unique climates, savvy vigneron and breathtaking scenery combine to create weekender magic

PHOTO: GRANITE HILLS, MACEDON RANGES





Mudgee's Gilbert Family Wines has quintessential country appeal.

It's official – Australia is one of the world's top wine growing countries, with global wine-lovers consuming more than 30 million glasses of Oz vino every day! With our vigneron proving to be major stars on the world stage, it's an exciting time to enjoy a weekend or short break in one of our fabulous home-grown wine regions to enjoy the authentic food, wine and country ambience. It's certainly top of our to-do list.

Grab a few itinerary ideas from **Lonely Planet**'s recently released *Wine Trails: Australia & New Zealand* guide book, which details 40 weekends of wine tasting with expert winery reviews, maps and practical details – plus recommendations of where to stay, what to eat, and of course, what to drink.



The Granite Belt produces fine reds, such as this Ballandean Cab Merlot.



Local produce features at The Cellar by Gilbert wine bar in Mudgee.

NEW SOUTH WALES Mudgee

Is there a more quintessentially Australian country town than Mudgee? It takes its name from the Indigenous Wiradjuri word 'moothi' meaning 'nest in the hills' and you can see why. With its historic early stone buildings, Cudgegong River, big eucalypts, undulating pasture, vineyard country and forested surrounds, Mudgee is pretty indeed.

The Hunter Valley was Mudgee's closest wine region for most of its history, but the two could not be more different. While the Hunter's weather is influenced by the Pacific Ocean, Mudgee is on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range and its weather more westerly influenced: hotter summers, colder winters, less rain in the growing season and less humidity. It's also higher altitude at 400m to 500m, with vines as high as 1100m in the Rylstone area, at Nullo Mountain. This combination of continental climate and well-drained sandy loam or slightly acidic soils, over clay, is suited to robust red wines – deep crimson Cabernet Sauvignons lead the way.

Mudgee has a rich past and was a notable goldmining area. Poet Henry Lawson is one of its favourite sons. The local wine industry recently went through a period of radical restructuring during which a third of its vines were uprooted; what remains should be the cream of the crop. Certainly, the wine quality, winery tourism and optimism of the vigneron are all on a high, with confident investment in cellar doors and some fine restaurants opening.

Mudgee is the first Australian wine region to be known for organic wine, due to pioneer **Botobolar** – claiming to be Australia's oldest organic vineyard, established in 1971 – and later subscribers **Lowe, Thistle Hill** and **Broombee**. At under four hours' drive from Sydney and with some 35 cellar doors to explore, it's a great winery-hopping weekend destination.

QUEENSLAND Granite Belt

Dapping the western flanks of the Great Dividing Range about 210km southwest of Brisbane, the Granite Belt is Queensland's only real wine region, where hillsides are lined with vineyards, olive groves and orchards growing apples, pears, plums and peaches.

It's located just north of the New South Wales border in a mountainous area where the 1000m altitude affords Queensland's coolest grape-growing climate. In 1905 the state government decreed the Granite Belt Queensland's official



health resort on account of its fresh, clean air. The mountainous terrain and high altitude are good news for the vines, too. The soils are predominantly decomposed granite, hence the region's name, and quite rocky, which favours high-quality wines, especially reds.

There are 25 wineries with cellar-door sales and the biggest nearby town, Stanthorpe, has some boutique accommodation and decent places to eat. Aside from the wineries' wares, craft beer and cider flow liberally. Stanthorpe is also the gateway to two scenic national parks, Sundown and Girraween, the latter featuring bulbous granite outcrops and, in spring, a blanketing of wild flowers.

Mainstream varieties such as Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay and Riesling are produced, and a recent new initiative, the **StrangeBirds Wine Trail**, champions lesser-known types. The trail leads you to wineries producing 'alternative' varieties, defined as representing no more than 1% of the total

Australian grape harvest. In the Granite Belt these include Barbera, Sangiovese, Malbec, Tempranillo, Durif, Nero d'Avola, Nebbiolo and Mourvèdre in reds; in whites, Chenin Blanc, Fiano, Gewürztraminer, Savagnin, Vermentino, Verdelho, Viognier and Marsanne.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA McLaren Vale

Just two years after the colony of South Australia was settled, John Reynell and Thomas Hardy planted the first grapevines in McLaren Vale in 1838. They couldn't have chosen a better spot – with its beautiful beaches of sparkling white sand, dramatic cliffs and gentle surf, and proximity to Adelaide, this is one of South Australia's favourite wine tourism destinations. There are over 80 cellar doors here, and more than a third of them offer local produce, ranging

from high-end restaurants to simple platters

With 30km of coastline, McLaren Vale has an extremely maritime climate which favours the so-called Mediterranean grape varieties, such as those of southern France, Italy and Spain, including Shiraz, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Montepulciano, Tempranillo, Sangiovese, Barbera and Nero d'Avola for reds; and Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne, Fiano and Vermentino on the white side. In recent years the region has re-focused on what it does best: red grape varieties now predominate, accounting for about 85% of the vines. At the same time, many of the cooler-climate varieties that never truly suited the local conditions have been jettisoned. The maritime climate means there are fewer extremes of temperature – nights are warmer and days cooler than might be expected, resulting in red wines with notably soft tannins.

No Australian region has explored its geology more thoroughly, but then, few have a geology as interesting and varied. Detailed research has resulted in soil maps and identification of rock sub-strata, with the result that many wineries now produce separate sub-regional bottlings of some varieties, especially Shiraz. The best of these are allowed to use the description McLaren Vale Scarce Earth Selection. With such treasure below ground, it follows that McLaren Vale is also noted for its large number of organic vineyards. .

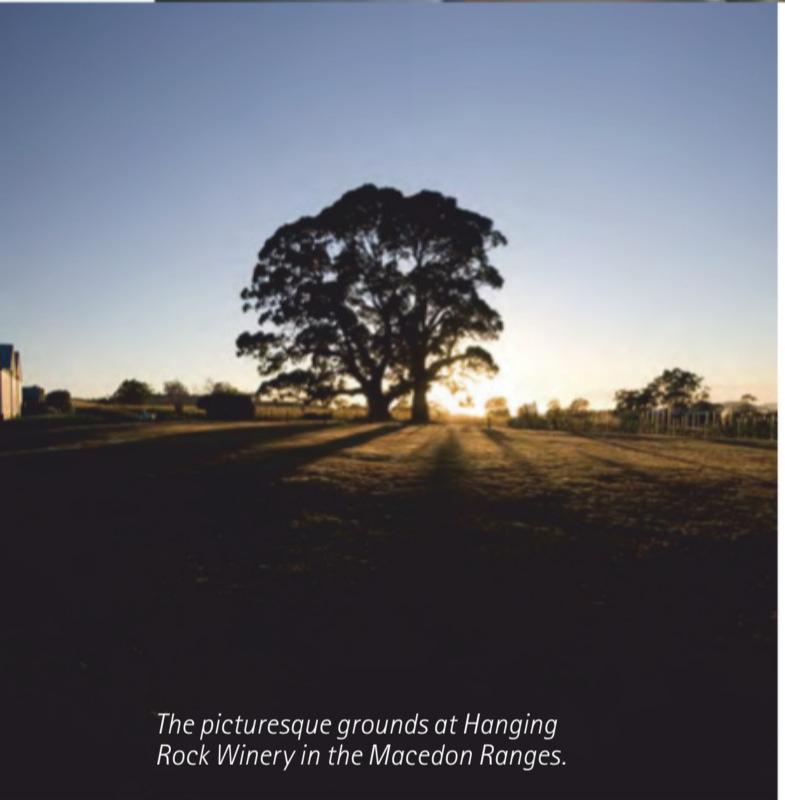
TASMANIA Pipers River

Neighbouring the Tamar Valley wine region, and slightly cooler given its proximity to the Bass Strait, Pipers River was the site Dr Andrew Pirie settled on after exhaustive research, much of which fed into his doctoral thesis on viticulture. He was after a place that closely matched the cool-climate terroir of northern France. Pirie's planting of **Pipers Brook Vineyard** in 1974 signalled the birth of the modern industry, and a host of other vineyards followed, adding a new dimension to the rolling hills of sheep-dotted pasture and eucalypt forests of this pretty part of northern Tasmania. →





Lenton Brae Estate is one of Margaret River's best wineries.



The picturesque grounds at Hanging Rock Winery in the Macedon Ranges.

Pirie was the first to realise that high humidity – rare in Australian vineyards – would be important if he was to emulate the wines of Burgundy and Champagne. Ocean breezes, relatively stable maximum temperatures and a long ripening season combine to yield fruit that retains a delicate bouquet and lingering sharpness, ideal for first-rate cool-climate wines. Nearly 40 years later Pirie is still hard at work in the area, making fine bubbly at his diminutive Apogee vineyard.

Riesling was the first variety to put Pipers River on the wine map, soon joined by Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and later, Pinot Gris. High-quality sparkling wine, made by the traditional bottle-fermentation method, is important here, with several high-profile producers such as **Jansz** and **Clover Hill**. Even boutique wineries, including **Delamere**, **Apogee** and **Sinapius**, make fine sparklings.

Several mainland wine companies have outposts in the region. Familiar names include **Accolade** with its Bay of Fires and House of Arras brands, **Yalumba** (Jansz and Dalrymple) and **Taltarni** (Clover Hill). With about 10 wineries open for visits, within an hour's drive of Launceston, Pipers is a rewarding day trip.

VICTORIA Macedon Ranges

The southern end of the Great Dividing Range runs like a spine down the Macedon Ranges region, with vineyards draped out either side. Many are small, family-owned concerns, dating back half a century or so – vines were planted in the late 19th century but it wasn't until the late 1960s that viticulture really started to take hold in the area. At between 300 and 700m above sea level and with a median January average temperature of around 18°C (64°F), this is true cool-climate wine. The fertile, volcanic soil and long ripening times – with harvest sometimes as late as May – allow complex flavours and aromatics to develop, resulting in a diverse range of light- to medium-bodied wines.

Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling thrive here and are much sought after for their crisp acidity and purity. But the list of wines produced by the 40 or so wineries here also takes in Shiraz, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Franc and other less familiar varieties, such as Lagrein.

There are some well-established cellar doors with purpose-built tasting rooms, but it's the smaller places which are the most endearing – and often run by the owners who double up as viticulturist-winemaker-cellar door manager. It's being welcomed at these family-owned businesses and treated like a guest that makes touring this region such a pleasure.

Towns and villages which flourished in the gold rush, such as Kyneton, Gisborne and Castlemaine, are now popular haunts for Melburnians, many of whom have been so charmed they've ditched big city life altogether. Incoming (and longstanding resident) artists and tree-changers have brought with them inner-city style, bars and live music venues – you'll find creative and foodie hubs that provide the perfect base for leisurely vineyard explorations.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA Margaret River North

Few wine regions anywhere in the world have rocketed to fame as quickly as Margaret River – 50th anniversary celebrations were in full swing in 2017 and into 2018. It's never been a secret to Australians that much of the country's finest wine is made here, and with vast surf beaches, deep forests of tall karri and robust jarrah trees, networks of limestone caves, and pristine air refreshed by its journey across the Indian Ocean from Africa, there's plenty beside the bottle to waylay visitors.

Extending about 90km north and south between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin, Margaret River is the most geographically isolated wine region in the world. Its rich, gravelly loams cultivate exceptionally high-quality fruit – 3% of Australia's wine, but a huge 20% of its premium wine, is produced here. Wine critic Jancis Robinson has said: "Margaret River is the closest thing to paradise of any wine region I have visited in my extensive search for knowledge."

The area's lifeline is Caves Road, which runs parallel to the coastline, linking up the array of superbly appointed wineries, many with great restaurants, plus flourishing artisan food and craft beer scenes. Winding from Dunsborough in the north and landing in Augusta, near Cape Leeuwin, in the south, the road is a delightful scenic drive, particularly in spring when colourful wildflowers carpet the region.

In recent years, Margaret River has stolen the mantle of Australia's leading Cabernet region from Coonawarra, and added great Chardonnay to the menu. Its Semillon Sauvignon Blanc blends are affordable, everyday dry white wines and lately Shiraz has also been hitting the heights. The received wisdom designates the north as best for Cabernet Sauvignon, and the south for whites, particularly Chardonnay, but exceptions can always be found. H



Reproduced with permission from *Wine Trails: Australia & New Zealand* © 2018 Lonely Planet, available at lonelyplanet.com



Escape to paradise

Discover Port Douglas and the Daintree, where two World Heritage-listed wonders collide

Ancient welcomes modern in Tropical North Queensland, where you can swim in cool jungle streams, hear traditional stories from Australia's first people and experience some of the world's best diving or snorkelling.

An hour's drive from Cairns Airport along the spectacular Great Barrier Reef Drive lies Port Douglas, where rainforest-clad mountains tumble into the sparkling turquoise Coral Sea and tropical coconut-strewn beaches, like popular Four Mile Beach, dot the coastline.

Port Douglas offers the excitement of ocean sailing combined with Great Barrier Reef snorkelling or serious diving on the outer reef with fully-equipped dive boats, including training and buddy divers.

After an exhilarating day on the water, enjoy the best of tropical produce and seafood back on land. Port Douglas' dining scene reflects the region's tropical lifestyle, with fresh local ingredients, low food miles and an Australian twist, all served up in style.

Port Douglas is the gateway to the one and only Daintree Rainforest, a primordial landscape where plants evolved from the food of dinosaurs and the smells of moist rainforest earth and delicate perfumes mingle to take you back millions of years.

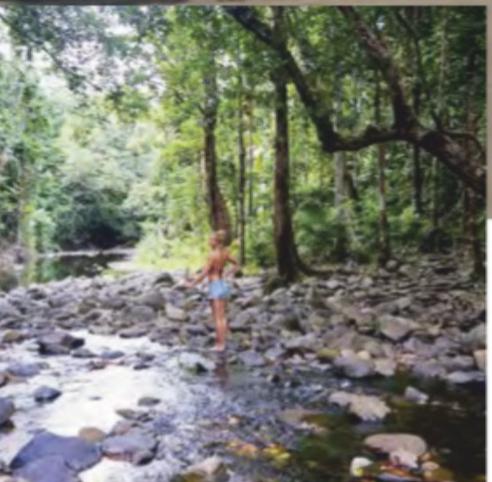
Colourful cassowaries, flightless birds endemic to the northern Wet Tropics, pad their way through the Daintree Rainforest on the road to Cape Tribulation searching for the fallen fruit which only they can disperse to maintain the forest.

The scenic and natural values recognised with World Heritage

status are highlighted in carefully curated displays and visitor attractions. Cruise on the wild side to see prehistoric crocodiles from the safety of a boat, and get up close to some of the native wildlife.

Enjoy locally brewed ales at one of the many Tropical North Queensland pubs, coffee and tea from Daintree plantations, or tempting taste sensations from rare fruits like durian and mangosteen.

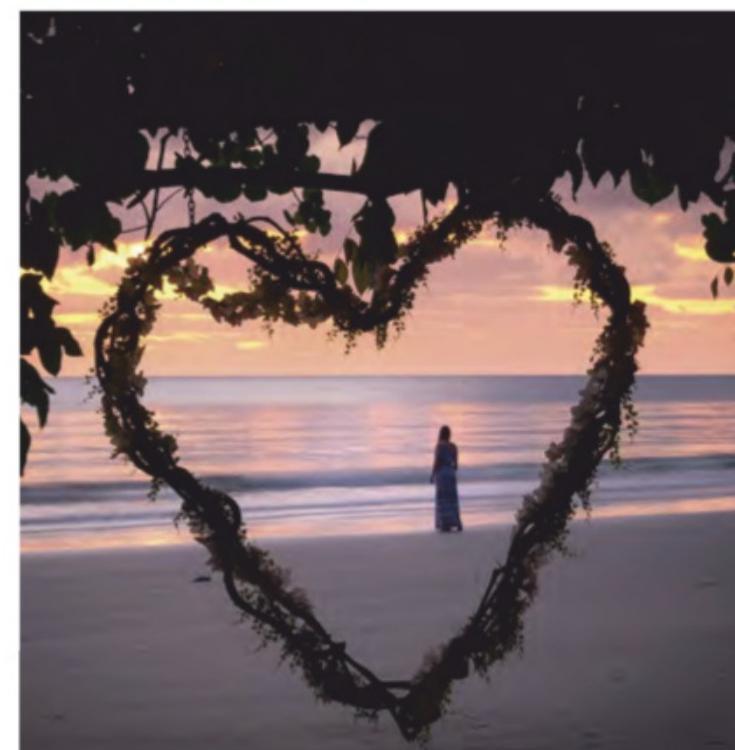
And when you require a bit of slow 'me time', indulge in massage and spa treatments, chill out by the pool back at your resort, or relax



and reconnect in luxury and seclusion at a rainforest lodge.

It's all waiting to be discovered in one fabulous holiday adventure destination at Port Douglas and the Daintree.

// Tourism Port Douglas Daintree
07 4099 4588
info@visitportdouglasdaintree.com
visitportdouglasdaintree.com



Where rainforest meets the reef



AQUARIUS SAIL & SNORKEL

Aquarius Sail & Snorkel is the perfect mode of transport for a luxurious sailing experience on the outer Great Barrier Reef, departing from Port Douglas. Snorkel the stunning coral gardens at Tongue Reef with a small group of only 30 guests.

+61 7 4099 6999
portdouglas.cruises.com

AQUARIUS
SAILING | PORT DOUGLAS



JUNGLE SURFING

Explore the rainforest canopy from a unique perspective with a Jungle Surfing guided zipline and tree platform tour. Spectacular views, story time on each platform and no experience necessary. The most exciting way to see the Daintree Rainforest!

+61 7 4098 0043
junglesurfing.com.au

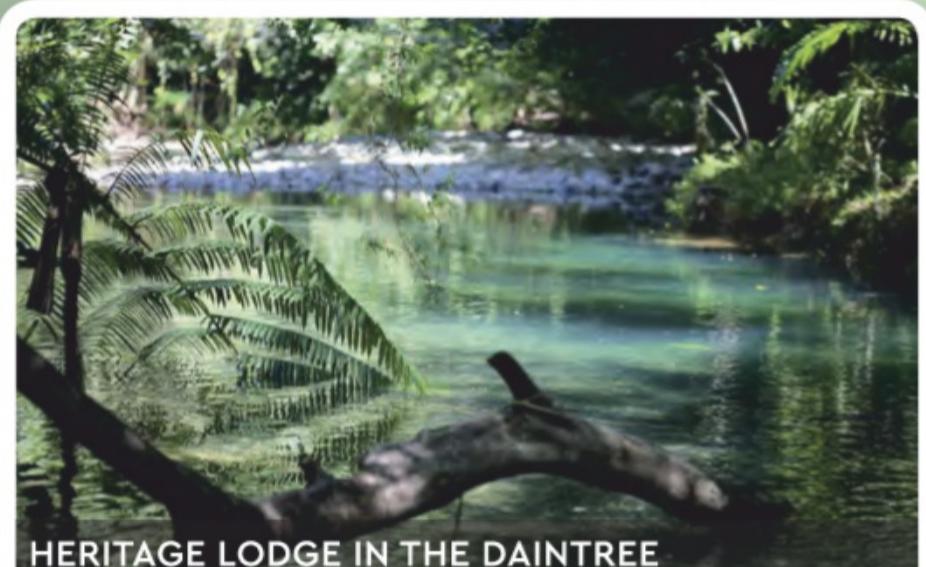
JUNGLE SURFING
CANOPY TOURS



HARTLEY'S CROCODILE ADVENTURES

Hartley's Crocodile Adventures is a must do wildlife attraction, located only 25 minutes from Port Douglas this is the best place to interact with a huge array of native Australian wildlife. Don't miss the famous crocodile feeding show and boat cruise along with amazing new "Gallery of Living Art" reptile display.

+61 7 4055 3576
crocodileadventures.com



HERITAGE LODGE IN THE DAINTREE

Heritage Lodge is a rare specimen in that its seclusion conjures up feelings of being in far flung places but its accessibility makes it the escapist's fantasy and an ideal place for those seeking a detox from the dirty dishwasher of modern life.

+61 7 4098 9321
heritagelodge.net.au

Heritage Lodge
...in The Daintree

#portdouglasdaintree



PORT DOUGLAS
DAINTREE



DIVERS DEN

AquaQuest fully equipped with the latest state of the art facilities, for unrivalled comfort and safety as you visit some of the most vibrant sites in the Agincourt Ribbon Reefs. These unique sites offer superb coral formations and an abundance of marine life, where you have the opportunity to swim amongst the underwater locals. AquaQuest is fully equipped for the certified diver offering 3 dives, nitro tanks, buddy diving and snorkelling.

+61 7 4099 6419 diversden.com.au



INDIGO PORT DOUGLAS

- 2018 Travel & Hospitality Awards Charter Company of the Year
- 2017 & 2018 Luxury Travel Guide Charter Company of the Year
- Sailing, Snorkelling, Lunch & Sunsets Cruises
- Overnight & Extended Private Charters
- Maximum of 12 guests

+61 429 933 033 or +61 429 901 250 **INDIGO** indigoportdouglas.com.au

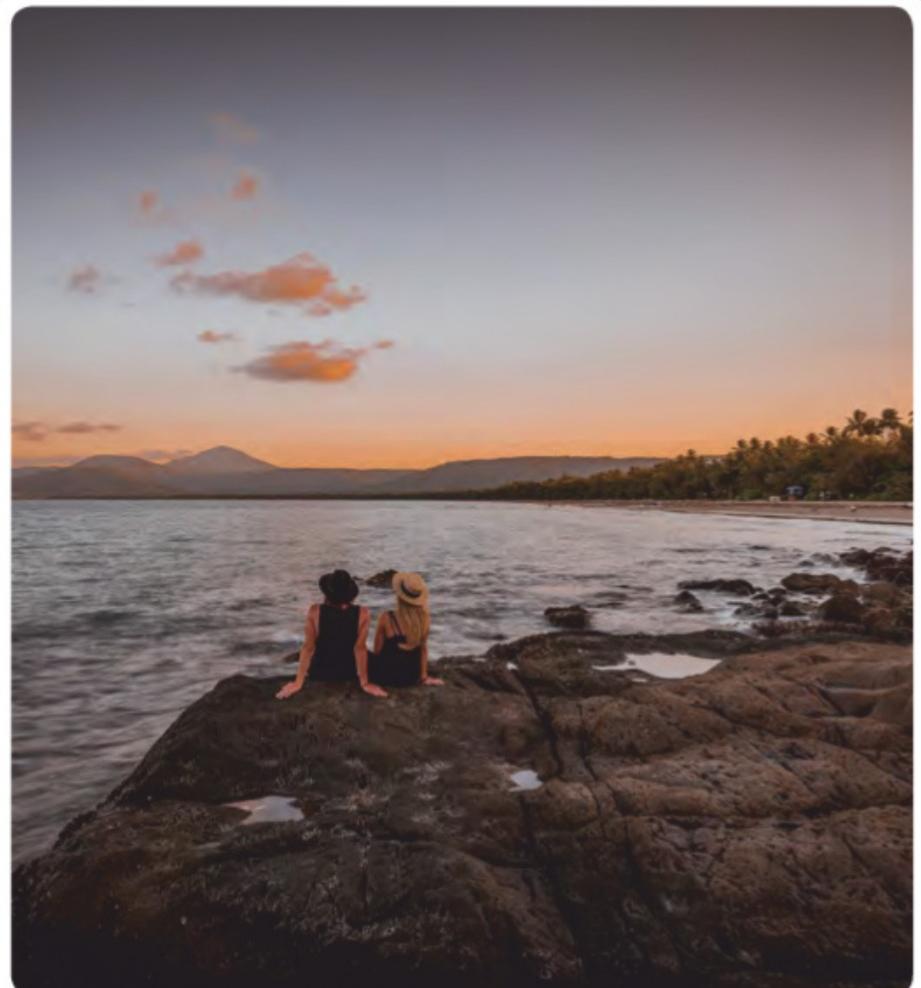


THE WILDLIFE HABITAT

Explore the award-winning Wildlife Habitat, a unique experience that provides guests with the chance to observe Australian wildlife up close. For extra special memories book "YOUR Wildlife Tour" a private 2-hour tour that takes you behind the scenes.



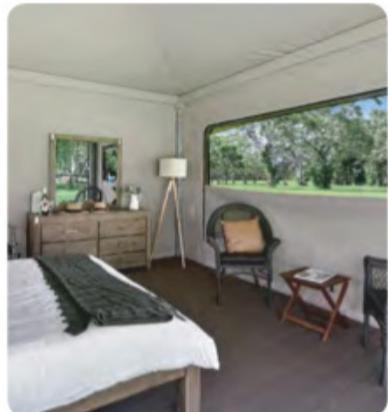
+61 7 4099 3235
wildlifehabitat.com.au



visitportdouglasdaintree.com



IT'S THE CAPITAL OF
DIPPING IN, DIVING IN,
PADDLING IN, TREKKING IN,
AND JUST TAKING
IT ALL IN



HABITAT NOOSA

ROMANTIC GLAMPING IN
NATIONAL PARK NEAR NOOSA

Camp in style at Habitat Noosa.
Surrounded by trees, with views of Lake
Cootharaba, a romantic night is set,
offering premium comfort right in the
heart of Cooloola National Park.

P 07 5485 3165

W habitatnoosa.com.au



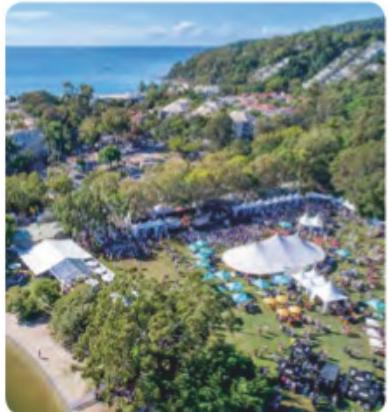
IKATAN SPA NOOSA

VIP UPGRADE WITH ANY TREATMENT

Feel the slower pace of life and serenity
that surrounds you with an ikatan Spa
experience. Book a visit to multi award-
winning ikatan, a wellness destination for
relaxation. *Show the ikatan receptionist
this offer (or photo) to choose your
complimentary VIP upgrade.*

P 07 5471 1199

W ikatanspa.com



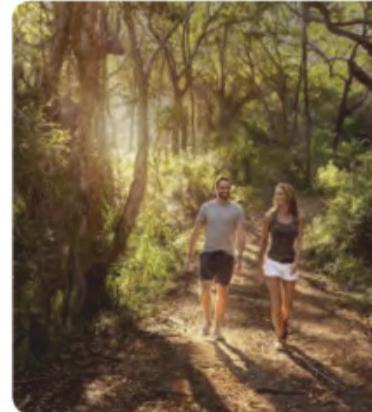
NOOSA FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

JOIN CHEFS, WINEMAKERS & FOODIES
16 - 20 MAY 2019

Enjoy great food, wine and live music
over five mouth-watering days - with
Neil Perry, Manu Feildel, Colin Fassnidge,
Ronni Kahn, Christine Manfield and
more at events across Noosa.

@ noosafoodandwine

W noosafoodandwine.com.au



RELAX - YOU'RE IN NOOSA

Make the most of a relaxing Noosa
escape, staying in beachfront luxury,
riverside tranquillity or in a country
cottage. Immerse yourself in Noosa's
nature and fill your days with long
lunches, browsing boutiques, at a
pampering day spa or trying a new
outdoor challenge.

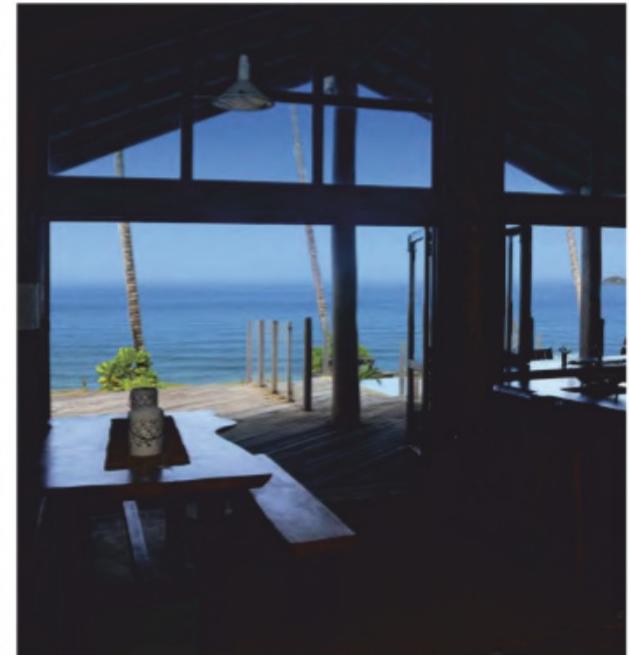
@ visitnoosa

W visitnoosa.com.au

retreat to romance

Perfect spots for a romantic getaway in this Great Southern Land





secluded intimate destination escapes in paradise

Port Douglas | Palm Beach Newell | Palm Cove

Our Island Atelier 8 /14 Grant Street | Port Douglas | Far North Tropical Queensland | AUSTRALIA

www.islandpointcoastalretreats.com.au | Contact Ronni Leigh +61(0) 419 232 322



THREE PRIVATE & EXCLUSIVE
RETREATS OVERLOOKING
THE MAGNIFICENT MURRAY
RIVER, SET THE SCENE FOR
YOUR NEXT ULTRA LUXURY
AUSTRALIAN ESCAPE.

AWARD WINNING LUXURY IN OUTBACK SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Each of the self-contained retreats, Collage, Montage & Pastiche are designed for reconnecting in sublime serenity; king beds, gas log fires with a private deck, heated pool, spa and jacuzzi. Savour the sunset over the river with a cruise on a restored 100 year old Gondola or a safari through the river's wetlands. Or simply enjoy it all from your balcony.

We promise your stay will create lifetime memories.

THE FRAMES
LUXURY IN THE RIVERLAND

TO BOOK:

+61 (0) 418 862 260 or www.theframes.com.au
Lot 7, Panorama Court, Paringa SA 5340 | cathy@theframes.com.au



BIG BLUE BACKYARD

Leave the rest of the world behind when you escape to one of Big Blue Backyard's secluded hideaways. Tucked away amongst dense bushland and only moments from Victoria's captivating St Andrews Beach, this private retreat is all about enjoying nature's gifts.

Inspired by African bush lodge living, Big Blue Backyard is home to three purpose-built sustainable hideaways. Immersed into their pristine surroundings, each offers the perfect place to unwind and reconnect. Spend your stay exploring the magnificent Mornington Peninsula, lapping up the sunshine at St Andrews Beach or chilling out in your own stylish abode. Round everything out with a beautifully laid-back dining experience (breakfast is included when booking) and enjoy a gourmet grazing platter or fantastic Australian-style barbecue.



Big Blue Backyard

A 56 Paradise Drive, St Andrews Beach, Victoria

T +61 5988 6011 **E** info@bigbluebackyard.com.au

W bigbluebackyard.com.au



BALGOWNIE ESTATE WINERY RETREAT & RESTAURANT

Indulge in the ultimate romantic escape when you stay at Bendigo's Balgownie Estate Winery Retreat & Restaurant. Set amidst vineyards and surrounded by Australian bushland, this beautiful hideaway is home to a fully functional vineyard, restaurant and cellar door, plus fantastic cycling and walking tracks.

Lap up all that the sensational region has to offer with a stay at the estate's modern homestead or camp out in a deluxe glamping tent. Equipped with all the essentials for a wonderful escape, they're a brilliant option for romantics and adventure-seekers alike. Whichever you choose, complete the idyll with dinner on the restaurant's alfresco deck and take in sigh-inducing views of the sprawling vineyard.

Balgownie Estate
WINERY RETREAT & RESTAURANT
BENDIGO

T (03) 5449 6222

E enquiry@balgownieestatebendigo.com.au

W balgownieestatebendigo.com



PAPERBARK CAMP

Just a few hours drive south of Sydney and close to the famous beaches of Jervis Bay, Paperbark Camp is Australia's original luxury safari camp. With a uniquely Australian setting and romantic accommodation, this fantastic escape is perfect for couples wanting to leave the rest of the world behind.

With 20 years' experience in sensational getaways, Paperbark Camp is home to a collection of charming canvas tents. All nestled amongst soaring eucalyptus and paperbark trees, each private hideaway features mod-cons like luxurious en-suites, wrap-around decking, polished hardwood floors and plush furnishings. Inviting couples to enjoy life's simple pleasures, the camp offers experiences like marvelling at a magical starry sky, swimming at white-sand beaches, exploring unspoilt national parks and sharing a picnic in a natural wonderland. Cycling in amazing Australian bushland and spotting dolphins on a leisurely cruise add to the list of incredible offerings.

An idyllic retreat with an undeniably tranquil atmosphere, Paperbark Camp has everything couples need to get back to nature in style. *This is the perfect antidote to a hectic modern life.*



A 571 Woollamia Rd, Woollamia NSW 2540

T 02 4441 6066 **E** info@paperbarkcamp.com.au

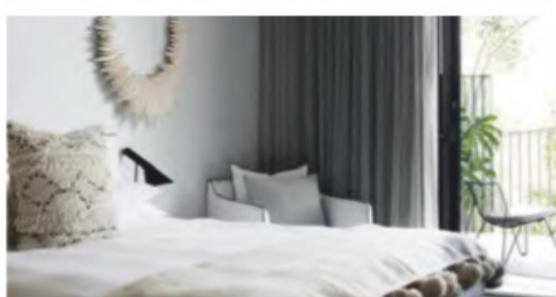
W paperbarkcamp.com.au

Hidden in the spectacular rainforest of the Black Spur, in the mountains on the edge of Victoria's famous Yarra Valley, is one of Australia's leading boutique accommodation retreats and the ultimate secret hideaway for couples.

Woodlands
rainforest retreat
by sensess

137 Manby Road
Narbethong Vic 3778
T: 03 5963 7150
E: woodlands@sensess.com.au
W: www.woodlandscottage.com.au





BANNISTERS HOTELS

A collection of luxurious coastal retreats, Bannisters invites couples to escape the world for an intimate getaway. With three sumptuous hideaways in New South Wales (Bannisters Pavilion and Bannisters by the Sea in Mollymook and Bannisters Port Stephens), this fantastic group offers the very best in seaside holidays.

Luxury-lovers and gourmands alike will be in their element when they stay with Bannisters. In Mollymook, enjoy a romantic dinner by the water at the iconic Rick Stein restaurant and feast on locally sourced seafood, sip cocktails in the treetops at The Rooftop Bar & Grill or unwind with a pamper-session at Bannisters by the Sea's fantastic day spa. However you choose to pass the time, you'll be treated to stylish accommodation, proximity to beautiful beaches and breathtaking coastal views. Welcome to pure escapism...

BANNISTERS HOTELS
mollymook

T 02 4455 3044 W bannisters.com.au



CALABASH BAY LODGE

Only 1 hour north of Sydney, the boat-access only Calabash Bay Lodge offers a secluded eco-luxury nature escape on an exclusive use basis.

Surrounded by 3 national parks, it's perfect for a romantic couples retreat - with a Master King pillowtop bed with plush linens & an Italian rain shower ensuite, Aspar & ROHR Remedy spa amenities & candles, water toys including a guest runabout boat, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and fishing equipment - and it's only 5 mins to the iconic Glenn Murcutt designed hatted restaurant Berowra Waters Inn.

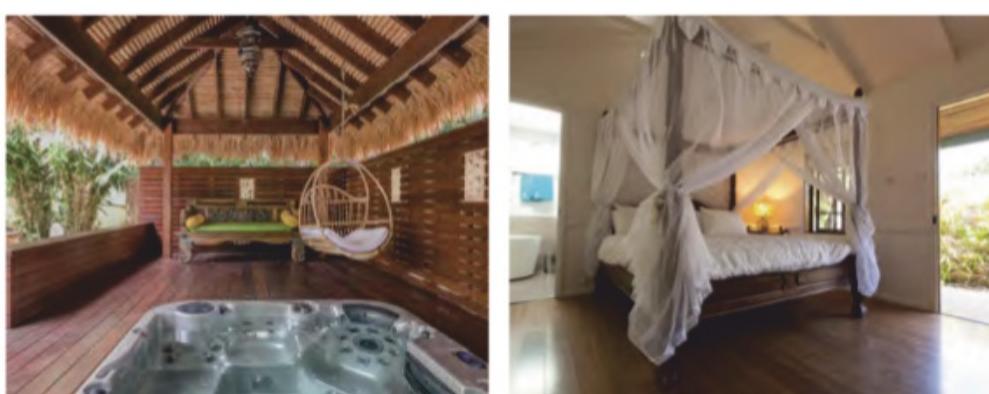
HAWKESBURY
The River's Just the Beginning

 **CalabashBayLodge**

Essential Experiences

- 5 course lunch or dinner with a private chef in one of 8 possible dining spaces
- Private stand-up paddleboard yoga lessons in front of Calabash Bay Lodge
- Kayaking to a secret waterfall at the head of one of Calabash Bay's 3 navigable creeks
- Bushwalk to the historic ruins of a Federation-era folly atop Calabash Point above the Lodge
- Unwind with a hot stone, remedial or relaxation massage right by the waterfront
- Arrive in style by 20 min scenic seaplane flight from Sydney Harbour direct to Calabash Bay Lodge's private jetty

T 1300 086 042 E relax@calabashbaylodge.com W calabashbaylodge.com @calabashbaylodge f @CalabashBayLodge



OWL HEAD LODGE

Surrounded by vineyards and offering lovely countryside views, Owl Head Lodge features a selection of self-contained and motel styled accommodation close to the historic township of Gulgong and a scenic drive to the wineries of Mudgee.

The unique Glass Cottage, motel-style Glass Studios, Shearers Cottages, and Slab Cottage, all with charming indoor-outdoor ambience, landscaped gardens and swimming pool - looking out across the Cudgegong Valley - make Owl Head Lodge the perfect rural retreat.

Ideal for those romantic escapes, or gathering for family and friends or a unique venue for your wedding or other functions. Owl Head Lodge is your perfect choice of accommodation as home base to visit the many attractions of this beautiful region!

Follow Mudgee's food and wine trail; try your hand at gold panning at Hill End; explore Wellington Caves; go on safari at the Dubbo Zoo; or glide along the waters through picturesque woodlands and towering sandstone pagoda rock formations at Dunns Swamp in Wollemi National Park.



A 241 Berlin Road, Gulgong 2852 **T** 0418 675 555
E info@owlheadlodge.com.au **W** owlheadlodge.com.au

SANCTUARY IN THE POCKET

A tranquil five-acre hideaway in the marvellous Byron Bay Hinterland, Sanctuary in the Pocket lends itself to romantic getaways spent relaxing. Also just a short drive from hotspots like Mullumbimby, Brunswick Heads and the golden-sand beaches of Byron Shire, this unique retreat is also only 30 minutes' drive from the Gold Coast Airport.

Set amidst pockets of rainforest and exotic gardens, two stylish cottages invite couples to enjoy the charms of Byron's hinterland. Both with luxe pools and breezy outdoor living spaces, Sanctuary in the Pocket's accommodation options feel totally private – just what a couples' escape calls for! Spend your stay chilling out in laid-back luxury or explore the wonderful local region for a memorable getaway.

Facilities:

- Balinese four-poster beds
- Private courtyards
- Woodfire combustion heaters
- Gourmet kitchens
- Plunge pools
- Balinese gazebos with daybeds
- Outdoor spas
- Barbecue entertaining areas/dining spaces

Rates: starting from \$250 per night off-peak



T 0409 449 414 **E** sanctuaryinthepocket@gmail.com
W sanctuaryinthepocket.com



The perfect beachfront retreat designed for relaxation and romance, or an action-packed adventure.



Situated opposite the spectacular Main Beach on the Gold Coast, Xanadu Resort offers high-quality accommodation for a honeymoon or romantic getaway. Spacious 1 & 2 bedroom apartments

BOOK NOW AND MENTION THIS ADVERTISEMENT TO RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY \$50 DINING VOUCHER.

Valid at Domanis Restaurant – Conditions apply

stay@xanadumainbeach.com.au

P. 07 5557 0400

www.xanadumainbeach.com.au



THE MOUSES HOUSE RAINFOREST RETREAT

MAGICAL MOUNTAIN CHALETS

Welcome! The Mouses House Rainforest Retreat is maybe the most unique rainforest resort found in Australia with a 4.5 star rating from StarRatings Australia. Located in World Heritage-listed Springbrook National Park in the Gold Coast Hinterland, it's only 400 metres from the magnificent, four-kilometre Twin Falls rainforest walk. Winner of multiple awards from ABIA, HMAA, Holidays for Couples and Queensland Tourism, the retreat consists of 14 spectacular rainforest chalets, many with a loft, offering picturesque views of cascading mountain streams and delightful sounds of nature.

Facilities

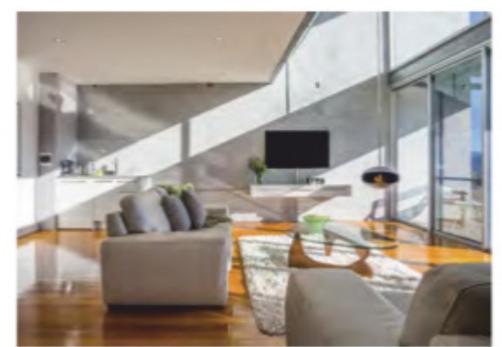
- Fully equipped kitchen • Wood fireplace • Reverse-cycle air conditioning
- Telephone and free Wi-Fi broadband internet in each chalet
- Separate bedroom with 22" HD LCD TV • 42" HD TV • PS3 with 120+ free movies on demand • Private balcony with 'Family Q' Weber BBQ
- Private in-chalet, two-person spa with rainforest views • Private outside hot tub in luxury level chalets • Bluetooth stereo • iPod dock • Spoil yourself with an in-room Swedish massage or other package (additional fee)

Included in your stay

- Free sauna and 38°C oak hot tub • Use of push bike, tandem or electric e-bikes • CDs and board games • 1/2 size tennis court • Complimentary iPad Mini during your stay, displaying designer eConcierge information

Rates Average rate of \$270 per night, per couple. For a "readers only" package, mention *Holidays for Couples* magazine.

A 2807 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, Qld **W** mouseshouse.com.au
T 07 5533 5192 or 07 3102 1889 (Brisbane local call)



MOUNT FRENCH LODGE

Located an hour from Brisbane in Queensland's stunning Scenic Rim, Mount French Lodge offers a luxurious escape, away from the rest of the world. Situated on an 107-acre cattle farm, the exclusive lodge is a fantastic base for exploring the surrounding food and wine trials, or for just relaxing in style.

At Mount French Lodge, you'll enjoy sweeping views of the stunning Fassifern Valley and Great Dividing Range from every room. Take it all in while curling up with a book beside a romantic fire, or head out with a picnic and discover the surrounding World Heritage-listed national parks. With all-inclusive packages available (including daily

cooked breakfast and gourmet hampers), you can also experience the best of the region's local produce.



A 139 Lutter Road, Charlwood, QLD, 4309 **T** 0499 873 620 **E** info@mountfrenchlodge.com **W** mountfrenchlodge.com



GIRRAWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL LODGE

ESCAPE TO NATURE FOR A DIGITAL DETOX

Leave your stresses behind and retreat to a tranquil oasis at Girraween Environmental Lodge. Set in Queensland's pristine Granite Belt region, the secluded hideaway offers couples a romantic chalet-stay surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty.

Equipped with all the essentials for a fantastic getaway, each comfortable chalet feels blissfully secluded. Here,

you'll swap internet, television and phone coverage for adventure and relaxation.

A collection of bush walk tracks are right on your doorstep, weaving past monolith granite outcrops, amazing flora and fascinating wildlife. There's also the nearby Girraween National Park to enjoy, blessed with breathtaking scenery.

Want to unwind? Relax on your private verandah and chill out in the outdoor spa. Or, get out and discover the fantastic local area and

it's wineries. At the end of the day, toast the occasion by the fire or unwind in your private spa bath. However you choose to spend your stay, you'll disconnect from the outside world and reconnect with each other.

RESORT FACILITIES:

- Couples' spa bath chalets with fireplaces
- Natural outdoor plunge pools

- Outdoor 'under the stars' spa
- 10 private bush walks

RATES:

From \$260 per couple, per night. Winery tours can be arranged, starting from \$120 per person.



A Pyramids Road, Wyberba **T** 07 4684 5137
E info@girraweenvodge.com.au **W** girraweenvodge.com.au



OCEANS MOOLOOLABA

Perfectly positioned adjacent to postcard-ready Mooloolaba Beach, the five-star Oceans Mooloolaba promises couples a relaxing escape. With 46 exquisite suites and penthouses all architecturally designed to allow maximum balcony area, the stylish resort is known for its stunning 180° views. For a romantic getaway, hit the nearby beach or relax in the comfort of your spacious self-contained hideaway, taking in a breathtaking panorama stretching from Point Cartwright to the Northshore.

Facilities

- Heated outdoor 25-metre lap pool
- Sunbathing deck with heated spa
- Movie theatrette
- Fully equipped modern gym and steam room
- Nespresso coffee machines in all apartments
- Luxury bathroom products

'Oceans of Romance' package from \$690 per night

- Two nights in an Ocean View Suite
- Candles, rose petals on King bed, mood music and lighting on arrival
- Gourmet hamper on arrival
- French sparkling wine and chocolates on arrival
- Luxury bathroom products

Oceans
mooloolaba beach

T 07 5444 5777 E stay@oceansmooloolaba.com.au
W oceansmooloolaba.com.au



CULGOA POINT BEACH RESORT

Nestled on the longest private stretch of sand in Noosa, Culgoa Point Beach Resort lends itself to romantic beach getaways. Overlooking the pristine waters of the Noosa River, North Shore and beyond, this relaxed escape is also just moments from the destination's most-loved attractions.

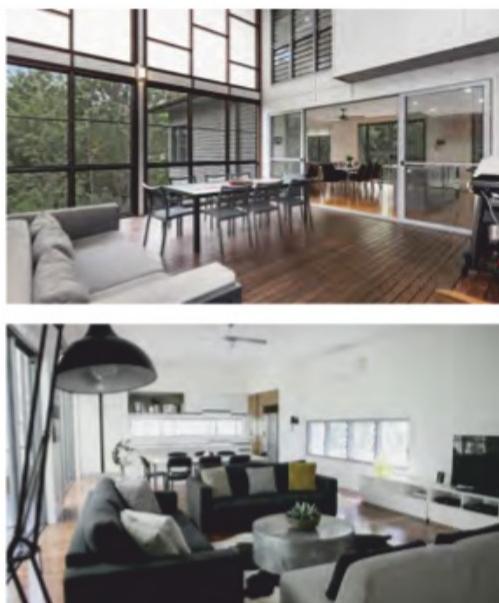
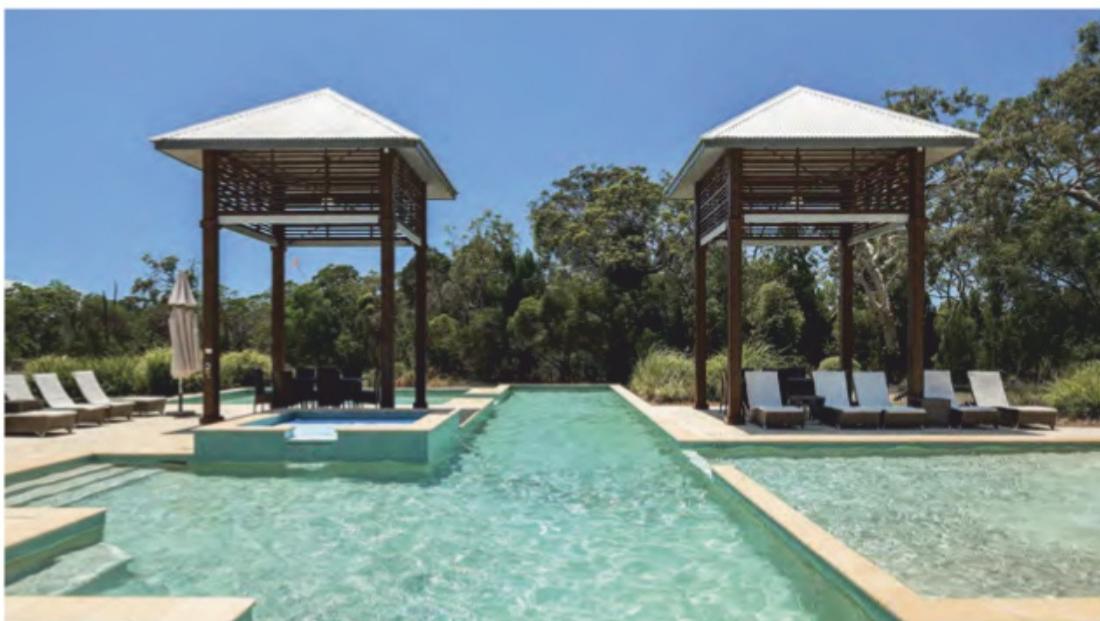
Located on beautiful Noosa Sound, Culgoa Point Beach Resort boasts one-, two- three-bedroom apartments with fantastic beachside, marina and garden positions. Also home to with an exclusive-use marina, swimming pool, spa, sauna, tennis court and kayak-, bike- and SUP-hire on offer; this wonderful hideaway offers everything couples need for a fun-filled getaway.

Also home to large entertaining areas and more than three-acres of tropical landscaped gardens, Culgoa Point Beach Resort is an idyllic place for a Noosa escape. Pack your swimsuit and prepare to unwind.



T 07 5449 6400
E reception@culgoapoint.com.au
W culgoapoint.com.au

Culgoa Point
BEACH RESORT NOOSA



BEACH ROAD HOLIDAY HOMES

Take the road less travelled, escape your worries and discover your own tranquil piece of paradise at Beach Road Holiday Homes. Just a scenic ferry ride from Noosa and its beloved Hastings Street, this relaxed hideaway invites couples to enjoy the destination's more laid-back side in style.

Fringed by native bushland, unspoiled beaches and pristine waterways, Beach Road Holiday Homes is situated at the gateway to the Cooloola-Great Sandy National Park. Perfect for couples wanting to mix a fantastic adventure with five-star luxury, the architect-designed eco-inspired homes create the ideal setting for relaxing. Reconnect as a couple, spend time with loved ones, explore the bushland surrounds or enjoy onsite facilities like swimming pools, a spa and tennis court for a sensational getaway.

Close to Noosa's famed dining and shopping hotspots, and immersed in nature, Beach Road Holiday Homes keeps romantic escapes blissfully simple. Discover it for yourselves and leave your stresses at the door.



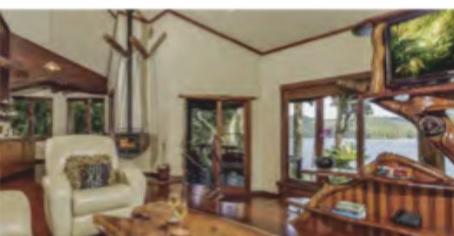
T 07 5440 6699 **E** info@beachroadholidayhomes.com.au

W beachroadholidayhomes.com.au



Matt Rowe Photography

WHY SECRETS ON THE LAKE?



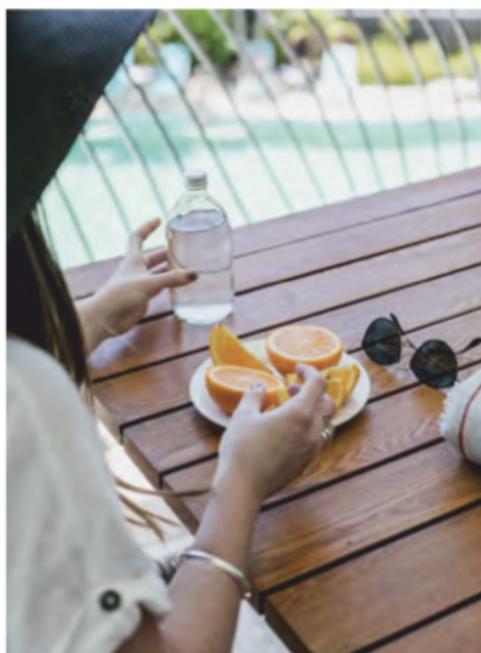
One thinks of a place to retreat, to rest, to share, to delight and renew. Secrets, however, is much more than this. It's the best of all worlds. It's the delight of being outdoors on the lake or indoors in front of a winter fireplace. It's the experience of being high in the rainforest canopy or walking barefoot on luxurious lawn amongst beautiful gardens and rock pools, and, it's the joy of sipping a good wine, over a leisurely BBQ on a summer evening, or excitedly watching nature's light show on the lake to be shocked by huge thunderclaps during an electric storm.

It is a magical place. It is a sacred site where our aboriginal ancestors used to gather to enjoy bunya nuts, to talk peacefully and leave tribal disputes behind. Until this day Bunya Nut Festivals are held as they have been done for thousands of years. In fact, the traditional owners dancing and celebrating in the picnic area below Secrets on the Lake is a highlight for visiting guests and locals alike.

For me, from the first time I sat on the edge of the Lake, I have felt the serenity of this piece of land (often referred to as positive energy for want of a better word). George and I have always felt that we were fortunate to be able to create a haven of this place. It has always been our aim to do everything to the best of our ability and to dream of beautiful things as we created our tree houses.

Often guests arrive frazzled from a big day's work, or a long trip or a domestic in the car. Secrets works its magic as annoyance is replaced with delight. A joke from George or Aldy, a chuckle from Clare or Jen and the guests are beginning to smile and anticipate a wonderful time together. Our Secret Place then takes over.... And we will hear "It took so little time to settle in and relax. Normally it would take a few days".

A 207 NARROWS ROAD, MONTVILLE, QLD **T** 07 5478 5888
E INFO@SECRETSONTHELAKE.COM.AU **W** SECRETSONTHELAKE.COM.AU



NOOSA BLUE

Blessed with stunning beaches and majestic hinterland, Noosa is a true couples' paradise. Offering couples the best of both worlds, Noosa Blue Resort is ideally located on the crest of Noosa Hill and looks out over both lush mountains and azure coastline.

Within walking distance of chic Hastings Street, Main Beach, Noosa National Park and Noosa Junction, this stylish escape features one-bedroom deluxe suites with large private balconies and penthouse apartments with rooftop terraces, hot tubs and barbecue facilities. Both boast breathtaking views and the convenience of a self-contained accommodation stay.

Providing the perfect getaway for couples, Noosa Blue Resort also includes impressive guest facilities, like two outdoor heated swimming pools, a steam room, gym, onsite cafe and yoga, pilates and massage centre. Of course, the main attraction here is Noosa's sensational Main Beach that's right on your doorstep. Two words – paradise found.

Noosa *Blue*
resort

T 07 5440 6699 E reservations@noosablue.com.au

W noosablue.com.au



PICTURE POINT TERRACES

Terraced into Noosa Hill and set amongst tropical rainforest, Picture Point Terraces is perfect for a romantic Noosa adventure. With an intimate and private feel, the stylish resort features panoramic views of Noosa, Laguna Bay and out to Double Island, and is only a short walk from the charms of Hastings Street.

Enjoy a fantastic escape when you claim one of Picture Point Terrace's luxury self-contained apartments for yourselves. With a northerly aspect, bi-fold glass doors, spacious balconies and private jacuzzis and spa baths, each of the resort's accommodation offerings lend themselves to a glamorous couples' getaway. Explore the renowned local area, or spend your stay chilling out by the heated outdoor pool or dining alfresco and taking in breathtaking water views – the choice is yours!

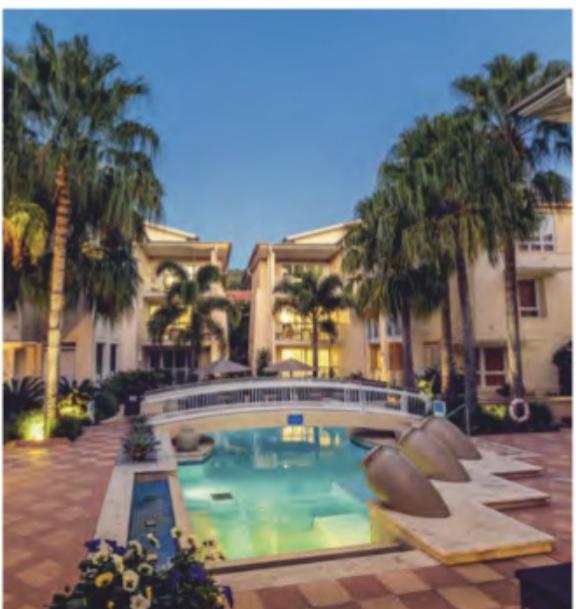
With a brilliant location and a long list of marvellous offerings, Noosa's Picture Point Terraces seems made for memorable escapes. Enjoy the calming ocean breezes, soak up the sunshine and relax.

RATES: Two-bedroom luxury apartments from \$430 per night and three-bedroom luxury apartments from \$520 per night.

Picture Point Terraces
Noosa's Premier Accommodation

T 07 5444 0077 E info@picturepointterraces.com.au

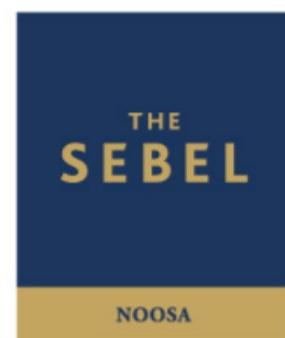
W picturepointterraces.com.au



THE SEBEL NOOSA

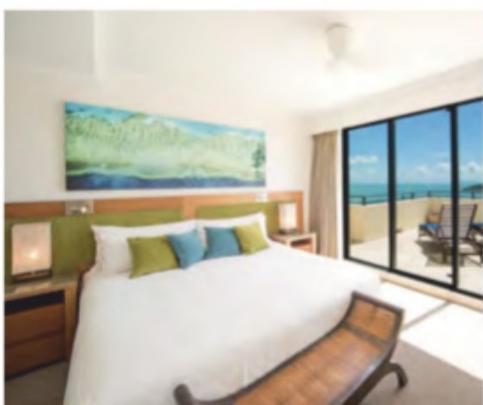
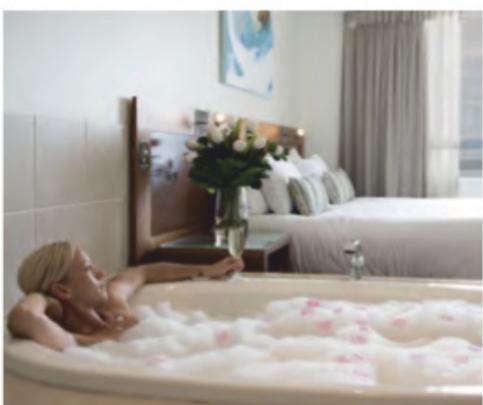
Located on iconic Hastings St and just mere moments from Noosa Main Beach, The Sebel Noosa offers tranquility in the heart of an exciting destination. Only a short walk from high-end boutiques and world-class dining spots, the stylish hideaway invites couples to indulge and relax.

Chic Hamptons-inspired apartments await at The Sebel Noosa, equipped with all the fabulous conveniences of home. Lending itself to weekends away and beachy getaways, the hotel keeps things beautifully relaxed. Live out your fantasies of relaxing poolside with a cocktail, hit the beach or explore the nearby national park for a magnificent getaway – it's up to you!



T 07 5474 6400 E H8776@accor.com

W thesebel.com



PINNACLES RESORT

Take your love to new heights at the spectacular Pinnacles Resort. The ultimate in luxury self-contained accommodation in Airlie Beach, this stylish escape is located in the gateway to the world-famous Great Barrier Reef and Whitsunday Islands – perfect for discovering Queensland's amazing north.

Consisting of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments with all the mod-cons (including internal spa tubs or Jacuzzi on the balcony), Pinnacles Resort provides an idyllic setting for a romantic getaway. From its elevated position, the sumptuous hideaway affords breathtaking views of the sparkling Coral Sea. Fantastic onsite facilities like a 20-metre wet edge swimming pool, infrared and traditional saunas, a fully equipped gym and tour desk also make a stay here one to really remember.

Sure to make an Airlie Beach holiday unforgettable, Pinnacles Resort is also happy to assist with planning a special proposal or romantic surprise. And with a variety of brilliant couples packages available, this beautiful escape makes for an amazing getaway.



A 16 Golden Orchid Drive, Airlie Beach, QLD
T 07 4948 4800 E reservations@pinnaclesresort.com.au
W pinnaclesresort.com.au



KINGFISHER BAY RESORT

Make like the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and escape to Fraser Island's beautiful Kingfisher Bay Resort for a five-star nature experience. You'll discover a World Heritage-listed paradise, brimming with natural beauty and amazing once-in-a-lifetime adventures.

HIT THE SAND TRACKS LIKE HARRY

Sit back, relax and let the resort's expert guides take you to the island's most iconic sights on a full-day guided 4WD tour. Departing Kingfisher Bay Resort daily, the sensational experience includes walks along the silica white shores of Lake McKenzie and the rainforest where the Duke unveiled the plaque for the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy initiative.

FLAVOURS FOR A ROYAL PALATE

Feel like royalty when you feast on delicious cuisine made with speciality ingredients from the rainforest and the resort's native wallum. Savour a bush tucker-inspired degustation experience at the award-winning Seabelle Restaurant and sample the same Australian cuisine enjoyed by the royal couple.

SLEEP LIKE A PRINCE

Leave the rest of the world behind when you stay in your own private retreat, hidden amongst World Heritage-listed surrounds. Top everything off with a pamper-session at the Island Day Spa, explore the native wallum on a ranger-guided walk or stroll along the jetty in Harry and

Meghan-style – it's the perfect spot for toasting the sunset with a glass of bubbles!

“FRASER ROMANCE” PACKAGE

FROM \$509PP TWIN SHARE

- Three nights' accommodation
- Upgrade to a Spa and Bay View room
- Buffet breakfast
- Bottle of wine and cheese platter
- 30-minute massage per person
- Passenger ferry from Hervey Bay

RESORT FACILITIES

- Villa, Bay View and Spa Room upgrades available
- Couples' treatments at the Island Day Spa
- Three restaurants and award-winning dining experiences
- Ranger-guided activities and walks
- 4WD island tours depart daily
- Four resort pools and outdoor spa



MIRAGE WHITSUNDAYS

Situated at the gateway of the Whitsundays' 74 islands, Mirage Whitsundays is a Tropical North Queensland gem. With luxurious self-contained apartments, villas and penthouses, this sumptuous escape overlooks postcard-ready water views and is just moments from famed Airlie Beach.

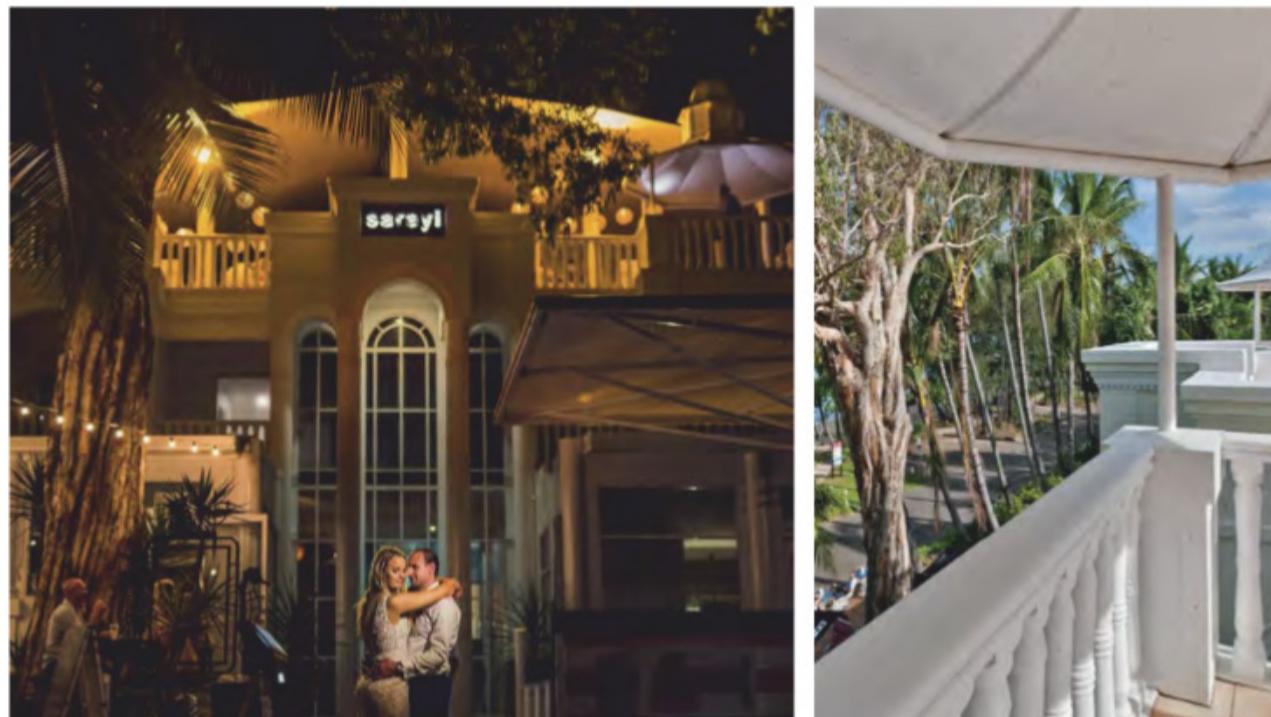
Retreat in style when you enjoy Mirage Whitsunday's wonderful offerings. From epicurean kitchens, and spacious terraces to a sleek pool and fabulous restaurant, there's plenty to make your Airlie Beach getaway one to really love. Of course, the brilliant location is the main reason to book a stay here, with the resort boasting a northerly aspect and absolute water frontage.

Romantic getaways are a Mirage Whitsundays speciality, with an array of incredible experiences available for couples. Explore the exciting local region (including the iconic Great Barrier Reef), or simply watch glamorous yachts pass and enjoy cooling coastal breezes from your private balcony. Holiday dreams are made of this...



T 07 4948 1940 **E** reservations@miragewhitsundays.com.au

W miragewhitsundays.com.au



THE SARAYI

Centrally located on a beautiful esplanade overlooking the Coral Sea, The Sarayi offers couples the perfect base for a Palm Cove getaway. With alluring water views and proximity to the beach, this boutique hotel boasts a fantastic mix of old-world charm and modern style.

Situated amongst fine dining restaurants, cafes and boutiques, The Sarayi features spacious self-contained one-bedroom apartments, plus hotel-style and garden studios. Take in wonderful ocean or mountain views from your elegant hideaway or get out and discover Palm Cove's magnificent attractions for a sensational escape. With everything you need right at your fingertips, you'll enjoy a relaxing, stress-free stay.



A 95-97 Williams Esplanade, Palm Cove, QLD, 4879

T 07 4059 5600 **E** info@sarayi.com.au

W sarayi.com.au



ALAMANDA PALM COVE

Experience pure beachfront luxury at Alamanda Palm Cove by Lancemore. Located in Queensland's spectacular Tropical North, the stylish resort is where couples can chill out amongst swaying coconut palms and by shimmering turquoise waters – heaven.

Only 25 minutes north of Cairns, Alamanda Palm Cove by Lancemore is perfect for those seeking a summery escape. With access to a golden-sand beach, plus a beautiful pool, elegant accommodation, a fantastic spa and an acclaimed beachfront restaurant, this wonderful hideaway promises a marvellous stay.

For a brilliant getaway, claim one of the resort's spacious one-bedroom suites for yourselves, complete with a king-size bed, exquisite linen, Miele kitchen appliances and a private balcony overlooking the sea. Take it easy and fill the days with relaxation or get out and explore the amazing local region. Do as little as possible or do a lot – it's up to you!



ALAMANDA PALM COVE BY LANCEMORE

A 1 Veivers Road, Palm Cove, QLD, 4879

T +61 7 4055 3000 **E** info@alamandapalmcove.com.au

W lancemore.com.au/alamanda



FITZROY ISLAND RESORT

Fitzroy Island is a tropical paradise of rainforest and beaches within the calm sheltered waters of Queensland's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Located 29 kilometres off the coast of Cairns, the island is a Heritage-listed national park, enjoyed by visitors from all over the world.

Just 45 minutes from Cairns by Fitzroy Flyer, this accessible 4.5-star resort offers a range of contemporary accommodation options including

spacious Island Suites with own kitchenette and large balcony, Resort Studios and Beach Cabins.

"Romance on the Reef" package From \$499 per couple, per night

- Accommodation in an Island Suite
- Return transfers from Cairns • Buffet breakfast daily • Three-course dinner for two • Chilled bottle of sparkling wine on arrival

Facilities • Contemporary restaurant • Foxy's Bar • Large swimming pool • Swim-up bar • Indoor cinema • Mini supermarket • Snorkel and kayak hire • Dive store – daily diving and access to the outer Great Barrier Reef • Eye Spy Sailing Catamaran • Glass-bottom boat tours • Walking trails • Turtle Rehabilitation Centre • Wedding venue • Fitzroy Flyer departs Cairns three times daily



A Fitzroy Island, Qld

T 07 4044 6700

E stay@fitzroyisland.com

W fitzroyisland.com



luxury • comfort • splendour

Saletoga Sands Resorts is a quality 4 star resort offering exceptional value, nestled within its own private 'Saletoga' bay on the South Coast of Upolu in Samoa.

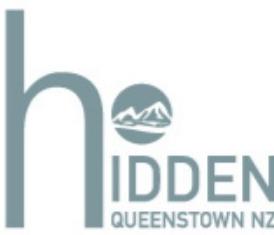


Stay 5 nights & save up to 40%

*Specific travel period and conditions apply.



P: + 685 41212 E: reservations@saletogasands.com
www.saletogasands.com



*Hidden away...
Hidden luxury...
Hidden you...*

Hidden, Queenstown



THE PERFECT BASE

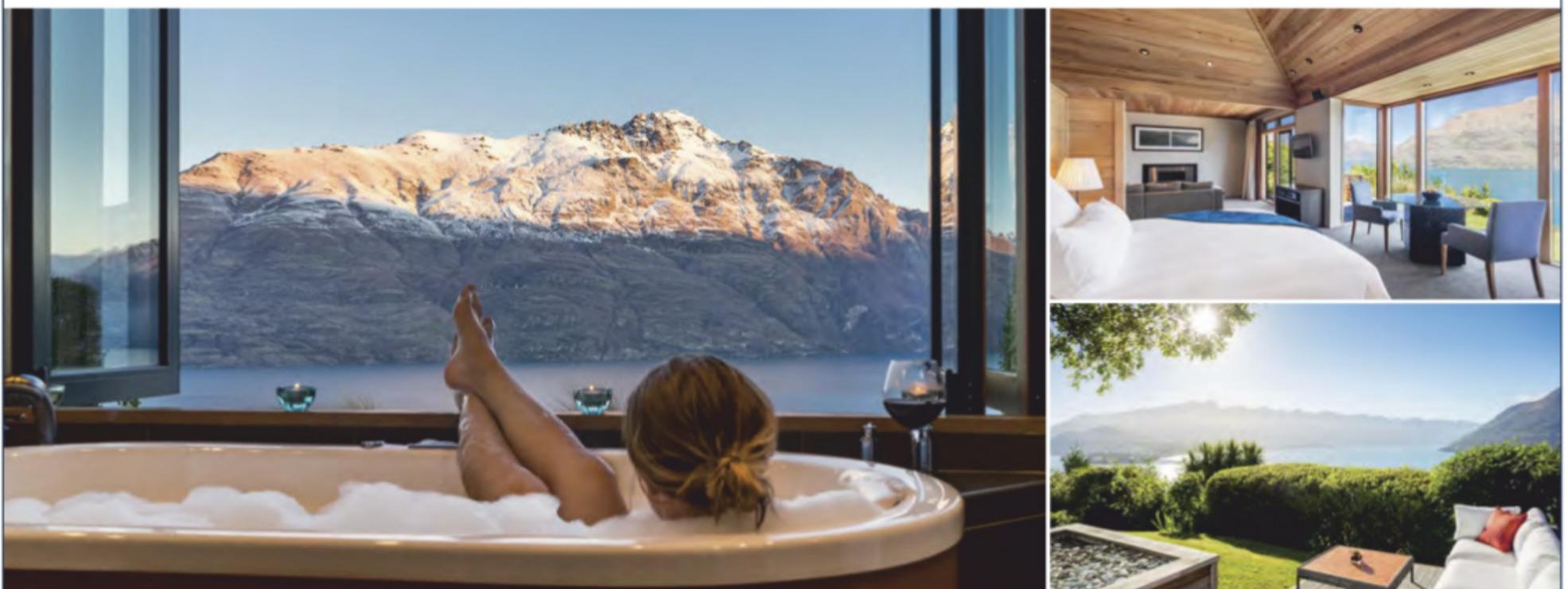
Overlooking the lake and mountains **Hidden** is just minutes from downtown. Embrace all that Queenstown has to offer.

Hidden Queenstown is luxury boutique accommodation situated on the edge of Lake Wakatipu where you can experience total relaxation and enjoy complete serenity.

TEL +64 3 442 6636
EMAIL stay@hiddenlodgequeenstown.co.nz
WEB hiddenlodgequeenstown.co.nz

QUEENSTOWN IS SPECTACULAR

AZUR ENABLES YOU TO BE PART OF THE SCENERY



Enjoy un-obstructed views from your private villa.

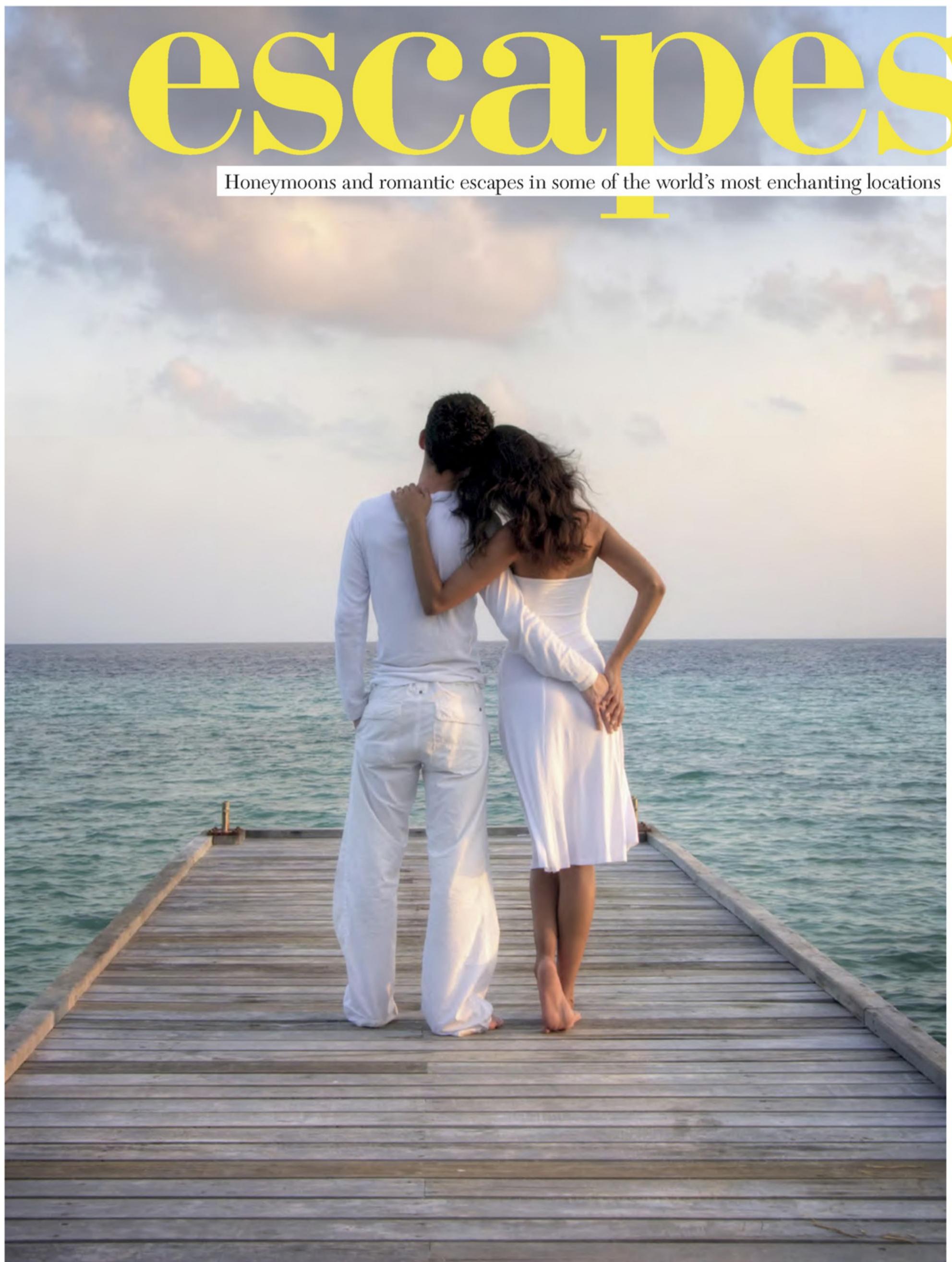
Whether you are after the thrill of an adrenaline rush or the tranquility of nature, complemented by personalised service, luxury and privacy – Azur is the choice.

www.azur.co.nz



escapes

Honeymoons and romantic escapes in some of the world's most enchanting locations



BALI Amarterra Villas

AT A GLANCE: Offering a unique blend of artistic Balinese ethnicity with modern technology and comfort, Armaterra's 39 villas are thoughtfully designed to provide comfort and luxury. Each villa enjoys a spacious area and are built with high quality local materials including beautiful parquetry flooring and marble bathrooms with jacuzzi bathtubs, and all boast private pools and cozy outdoor living and dining rooms. Staying here is an experience of unprecedented luxury, serenity and originality. **LOCATION:** Nusa Dua is an upmarket enclave of luxurious, multi-starred resorts and hotels located on the southeast of the Bukit Peninsula, around 30-minutes from the tourist area of Kuta, the airport and the lovely seaside village of Sanur. Armaterra Villas are just a few steps from the white sands of Nusa Dua Beach and close to the Bali Collection Shopping Mall with its boutiques, department store and cafes, bars and restaurants. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** The charming and peaceful surroundings are perfect for romantic sunrise walks along the beach and leisurely bike rides along the adjacent boardwalk. Couples will be in 7th heaven with a treatment at the Amarta Spa, starting with a holy water blessing upon arrival, followed by a coconut foot bath and china bell ritual to balance energy, then a massage therapy of your choice finished with the Balinese Bija blessing and lucky stone ritual. **CONTACT:** Amaterra Villas, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, +62 361 776400, sales@amarterravilla.com, amarterravilla.com



BALI Amadea Resort & Villas

AT A GLANCE: Amadea Resort & Villas is a stylish resort that combines the vibrant side of Seminyak with the laid back lifestyle of Bali, and is perfect for couples wanting to enjoy a romantic getaway or honeymoon. Accommodation options include hotel rooms, apartment suites, rooftop and junior suites plus there's two-bedroom villas and a four-bedroom villa perfect for friends or wedding guests. **LOCATION:** Located just minutes from the beach on fashionable "Eat Street" in the heart of Seminyak, you are within walking distance of designer boutiques and markets, fine-dining restaurants and cafes, day spas, beach bars and cool clubs. It's the perfect spot for those who want to be in the heart of the action but have peace and quiet when relaxing in their villa or suite. The location couldn't be better as it's just 10 minutes from Legian, 15 minutes from Kuta and 25 minutes from Bali's international airport. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** The gorgeous pool villas and suites which combine the best in style and comfort, and Bistro Batu Kali restaurant, which is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You will also love the on-site spa which offers guests discounts on all services – in fact you could say Amadea Resort & Villas is your perfect honeymoon destination! **CONTACT:** Amadea Resort & Villas 55 Kayu Aya, Seminyak, Bali, Indonesia, +62 361 847 8155, info@arvs.pphotels.com, arvs.pphotels.com



BALI

Bali Mandira Beach Resort & Spa

AT A GLANCE: Bali Mandira Beach Resort & Spa is a four-star haven of holiday charm located on one of the best beaches on the island of Gods. This is honeymoon heaven! The resort features 191 spacious rooms, suites and villas, offering a relaxed environment, inviting traditional Balinese decor and some of the finest facilities in Bali. Close to the ocean and surrounded by lush tropical gardens, various accommodation options let guests unwind in style and comfort following a long day of beach activities. The resort also provides daily morning yoga classes, as well as complimentary scuba diving demonstrations and surfing classes every week for guests. **LOCATION:** The luxurious resort is set amongst five acres of beautifully landscaped tropical gardens in front of Legian Beach, with stunning panoramic views across the Indian Ocean. Legian's wide sandy beaches and famous waves make it a heavenly place for swimming and surfing. A large array of dining and entertainment options, excellent shopping malls and traditional art markets await, while Seminyak is conveniently within walking distance. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** Enjoying a romantic dinner under the stars on the beach, garden or beside the private swimming pool in your villa; Balinese cultural nights; being spoiled at GLOW spa; or simply sipping on a cocktail mixed by resident mixologists while watching the sunset. **CONTACT:** Bali Mandira Beach Resort & Spa, Legian, Bali, Indonesia, +62 361 751381, balimandira.com



BALI

Bali Dynasty Resort

AT A GLANCE: Looking for the ideal couple's getaway in Bali that includes shopping, great restaurants and exciting activities? Then the Bali Dynasty Resort could be for you. Offering a wide range of services, facilities and activities, the resort features 313 rooms all with their own private terrace or balcony. There's five bars, three swimming pools (including a dedicated adults-only pool), a spa, gym, beach club and a choice of six restaurants to enjoy. Each has its own individual theme and caters for different budgets from fine dining to casual dining with a variety of entertainment options. **LOCATION:** This premier beachside resort is conveniently located ten minutes drive from the airport on the vibrant South Kuta Beach strip and within walking distance of Kuta's nightlife, art markets, cafes and restaurants, Waterbom Park and Discovery Shopping Mall. This is a great location for couples wanting to be within easy distance of the bars and clubs of Kuta, but far enough away to enjoy the peace and quiet of the beachfront position. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** Enjoy the fun at Gracie Kelly's Irish Pub; relax at the adults-only Lazy Pool; sip cocktails at the brand new Sunset Bar which has happy hour twice a day (!); or watch the magical sunset from the resort's private beach club. Offering romantic vibes with a magnificent ocean view, the Luxury Tent Villa is perfect for a romantic 'glamping' getaway. **CONTACT:** Bali Dynasty Resort, South Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, +62 361 752 403, reservations@bdr.pphotels.com, bdr.pphotels.com



BALI

InterContinental Bali Resort

AT A GLANCE: InterContinental Bali Resort is an award-winning five-star beachfront resort with an endless stretch of white sand beach and the best sunset at Jimbaran Bay.

LOCATION: The resort sits on 14 hectares of tropical landscape overlooking the tranquil waters of Jimbaran Bay on the island's southern coastline. It's conveniently positioned midway between the private resort enclave of Nusa Dua and the vibrant tourist playground of Kuta, and just a ten minute drive from Ngurah Rai International Airport.

COPLES WILL LOVE: Tented canopies scattered along a beachfront path are especially for private and very romantic beachside dining. With a set dining menu or succulent seafood from Jimbaran Gardens, the intimate evening rendezvous also includes flickering candles, tropical breezes and the sound of the waves gently lapping the shoreline. Couples can also contact their personal butler to release a sky lantern, a beautiful Asian tradition to celebrate special occasions by sending wishes to the skies. The resort offers indulgent spa experiences at Spa Uluwatu, designed to pamper and relax couples in a restorative oasis setting. The ultimate are the three self-contained private spa villas, perfect for honeymooners and pre-nuptial brides and grooms. **CONTACT:** InterContinental Bali Resort, +62 361 701 888, bali@ihg.com, icbali.reservation@ihg.com, bali.intercontinental.com



BALI

Kayumanis Nusa Dua Private Villa & Spa

AT A GLANCE: Kayumanis Nusa Dua Private Villa & Spa is a collection of exclusive adult-orientated one and two bedroom villas, a honeymoon suite and owner's residence each nestled within its own secluded walled garden. All villas feature semi-open bathing facilities complete with outdoor shower recess, a personal plunge pool edged by a sundeck and reclining lounges as well as ample space for outdoor dining and romantic interludes. **LOCATION:** Kayumanis Nusa Dua Private Villa & Spa are tucked in the midst of the wide expanses of Nusa Dua's vast botanical plantations and gardens that hug the white sand beaches of the southernmost part of the island of Bali. **COPLES WILL LOVE:**

A unique experience at Kayumanis Nusa Dua that honours the sea is an elegant dinner created especially for couples in love. This evening of indulgence involves a personal escort to the beach where an intimate table for two awaits under the stars, just footsteps from the shoreline. A private butler is on hand to serve a sensational seven-course menu highlighted by island-fresh seafood and other gourmet delights. The night is cooled by a soft breeze drifting over the ocean and melodious Balinese music plays in the background to set the mood. This magical rendezvous on the beach is the perfect way for guests to celebrate the spirit of romance.

CONTACT: Kayumanis Nusa Dua Private Villa & Spa, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, +62 361 972 777, experience@kayumanis.com, kayumanis.com



BALI

Maya Ubud Resort & Spa

AT A GLANCE: This award-winning resort is a masterpiece of contemporary design and ethnic chic, situated in Bali's most romantic region. Maya Ubud Resort & Spa is the perfect setting for a wedding, romantic getaway or honeymoon. Considered one of Bali's finest resorts, it is renowned for its amazing spa, which is situated right by the gurgling river, and its top-class dining options. Accommodation consists of delightful rooms, pool villas and garden villas with a choice for every couple's budget. The hectares of gardens are simply incredible, creating a world within a world - a place of utmost peace and quiet. **LOCATION:** Situated In Bali's beautiful mountain region of Ubud, the resort is set within 10 private hectares, in hillside gardens between a steep river valley and gently swaying fields of rice. Just a 30-minute stroll or quick car ride away is the bustling artistic hub of Ubud where the boutiques provide great shopping and the restaurants and cafes are some of the best to be found in Bali. **COUPLES WILL LOVE:** A romantic dinner for two on the Starlight Deck under a stunning canopy of stars, savouring a degustation menu and sparkling wine served by a private butler. A couples spa treatment is a must-do – truly it's amazing! Maya Ubud's Honeymoon Package is available all year round at a discounted rate and topped off with exquisite gifts. **CONTACT:** Maya Ubud Resort & Spa, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia, +62 361 977888, info@mayaubud.com, mayaresorts.com



BALI

The Samaya Seminyak

AT A GLANCE: The Samaya Seminyak is an award-winning villa and spa resort coupling unrivalled Balinese hospitality with a spectacular beachfront location and a "We are here to serve" attitude. The beachside pool villas are unrivalled for space and amenities and the Royal Courtyard Villas across the road are nestled in their own private 'village' with tropical gardens and private lap pools. **LOCATION:** The Samaya is set right on the beachfront in hip Seminyak, the vibrant playground of choice for Bali's resident fashionista crowd. With spectacular, unobstructed ocean views and arguably the finest view of the town's famous sunset, the resort is the natural choice for couples and honeymooners wishing to escape the bustle of street life while remaining within walking distance of the area's famous boutiques, restaurants and bars. A walk along the beach will take you to Bali's famous beach clubs, Potato Head and KuDeTa and right next door is famed La Lucciola restaurant and the Petitenget Temple. **COUPLES WILL LOVE:** Late afternoon as the sun begins its descent into the ocean and the locals come to sit on the beach and watch the most incredible sunsets. Dine at the beachfront Breeze restaurant or enjoy a sundowner at the bar as the sky reflects the colours of orange, purple and pink – heavenly. You'll also love the absolute bliss of staying in a private pool villa with the beach just steps away. **CONTACT:** Seminyak Beach, Bali Indonesia, +62 361 731 149, info@thesamayabali.com, seminyak.thesamayabali.com



THAILAND

Amari Koh Samui

AT A GLANCE: Begin with a picture perfect setting: blue skies, aquamarine seas, white sandy beaches and swaying palms. Now add a resort with contemporary airy spaces, delicious dining options, the latest conveniences and legendary Thai hospitality and you have the recipe for the perfect escape on a tropical island. Amari Koh Samui boasts rooms and suites that are elegantly designed, offering ample space for couples to unwind. For those looking for a little more space, the junior suites provide just that, with added luxurious touches including a private terrace with magnificent views of the beach. **LOCATION:** Set on serene Chaweng Beach just 10 minutes from the airport, a short drive or stroll will take you to the fashionable boutiques, lively markets, restaurants and bars of Chaweng town, Koh Samui's favourite beach. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** Walking along the white sandy beach in the early morning light or just before sunset when the waves lap gently on the shore. And then there's the food! Lovers of Italian cuisine will delight in the flavourful cuisine dished up at Samui's favourite Italian restaurant, Prego and if Asian cuisine takes your fancy you will love Amaya Food Gallery which takes inspiration from Asian street foods. And for the ultimate couple's rejuvenation experience, visit Breeze Spa to enjoy one of the signature mood treatments designed to rebalance the mind, body and soul. **CONTACT:** Amari Koh Samui, Chaweng Beach, Samui, Thailand, +66 77 300 306, amari.com/koh-samui



THAILAND

Centara Grand Beach Resort & Villas Krabi

AT A GLANCE: A five-star tropical hideaway in one of Thailand's most beautiful regions. The resort's private beach overlooks the dramatic limestone cliffs of the Andaman Sea while its ocean-facing pool villas are perfect for a special getaway. Together with a James Bond-style arrival in a private speedboat, you have the makings of a fine romance. **LOCATION:** Located on its own 500-metre beach, 15 minutes by boat from the beach resort town of Aonang, the Centara Grand is backed by national park with amazing vistas across the azure Andaman Sea towards Phang Nga and the Phi Phi Islands. Enjoy snorkelling, diving, rock climbing, and wildlife spotting on a day trip to the nearby islands – or just relax at the resort! **COPLES WILL LOVE:** A private sunset dining experience is a must, served right on the beach or in the seclusion of your infinity pool villa while you soak up the ocean vistas. Adventure-lovers can take a kayak trip and picnic to a small deserted island or dive the amazing coral reefs nearby (there's even a full PADI dive school and water sports centre on site). Looking to relax? Indulge with a couple's spa journey at Spa Cenvaree, take a shopping/dining trip to the nearby township, or simply enjoy the privacy, swimming pools and restaurants of this totally relaxing escape. **CONTACT:** Centara Grand Beach Resort & Villas, Krabi, Thailand, +66 75 637 789, rsoaus@chr.co.th, centarahotelsresorts.com/centaragrand/ckbr/



THAILAND

The Cape Panwa Hotel

AT A GLANCE: The Cape Panwa Hotel defines tropical grandeur by blending superbly with the surrounding natural beauty while providing excellent service, stylish sea-facing pool villas and an exclusive beach. Accommodation options range from Superior Rooms with seaview balconies to a variety of suites ranging from Junior Suites through to the incredible Cape Absolute Suite. There's also spacious Pool Villas sitting in complete privacy and surrounded by lush tropical gardens. Dining options are many and varied and the Cape Spa will delight all the senses.

LOCATION: Tucked away in a dreamy, secluded corner of Phuket a one-hour drive from the airport but only ten-minutes from Phuket Town, the Cape Panwa Hotel is located on Panwa Beach, surrounded by a grove of coconut trees and tropical gardens.

COPLES WILL LOVE: Cocktails under the trees on the Top of the Reef Terrace overlooking the sea before a magnificent meal in the restaurant or a romantic, private dinner on the beach with your own personal waiter. For sheer, decadent luxury nothing can beat staying in the Cape Absolute Suite which is just steps away from the romantic palm-fringed beach – 530 square metres of absolute luxury! Stay five nights and take a complimentary cruise on the Panwa Princess Yacht.

CONTACT: The Cape Panwa Hotel, Phuket, Thailand, +66 76 391 123-5 ext. 117, reservations@capepanwa.com, capepanwa.com



THAILAND

Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort

AT A GLANCE: Tucked away in secluded tranquility on Phuket's south-western coast, Le Méridien Phuket is the perfect venue to have a dream wedding and a romantic honeymoon. The Resort is nestled on a 40-acre seaside haven, boasting a secluded 500-metre pristine beach, lush tropical greenery and well-appointed 470 rooms and suites. Embark on a gastronomic journey filled with delicious discovery in the ten restaurants and bars offering the world's best cuisines.

LOCATION: The resort is a 45-minute drive from Phuket International Airport and just a five-minute drive to Phuket's popular entertainment and shopping districts of Patong and Karon, and historic Phuket Town with its cultural buildings and streets is only 30 minutes away.

Aside from many outdoor beachside locations for a wedding ceremony, the Resort's private yacht, the *Born Free* can host an intimate wedding ceremony and cocktails.

COPLES WILL LOVE: A sunset cruise aboard the resort's private yacht and sunset strolls along the secluded beach surrounded by the resort's tropical splendour. Before you leave, indulge in a relaxing couple's massage at Le Spa – a sanctuary of peace and tranquility with an exotic range of pampering spa treatments available to soothe the mind and body.

CONTACT: Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort, Phuket, Thailand, +66 76 370 100, LM.HKTMD.GroupSales@marriott.com



THAILAND

SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort

AT A GLANCE: Boasting a wonderful beachfront location with deluxe pool villa accommodation, a renowned spa and plenty of dining options, this luxe hideaway has it all including proximity to Phuket Old Town's attractions. Made utterly beautiful by historic Sino-Portuguese architecture, grassy paths and frangipani trees strung with lanterns, SALA Phuket offers couples a choice with 79 sumptuous rooms, villas and suites, 63 with their own private pool. **LOCATION:** Just 20 minutes from Phuket International Airport, 15 minutes from the famous Blue Canyon Golf Course and 25 minutes from scenic Phang Nga Bay, staying at the resort means you won't have to travel far for a fantastic experience. Of course, it's SALA Phuket's beach access that will really win over couples, with pristine Mai Khao Beach just steps away from your own private pool villa. **COUPLES WILL LOVE:** Sipping cocktails at the Beach Bar as the sun sets before toasting the occasion with a romantic dinner on the restaurant's rooftop – or an intimate dinner à deux in your amazing pool villa. And then there's the resort's special 'personal and private' service, meaning staff will customise a stay around your needs from cooking classes (a must-do!) to scuba diving or whatever else your heart desires. Finish it off with a couple's spa treatment for a pampering addition to your romantic holiday. **CONTACT:** SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, Phuket 83110 Thailand, +66 76 338 888, salaphuket.com



THAILAND

Silavadee Pool Spa Resort

AT A GLANCE: An exclusive paradise on one of the world's most beautiful islands, Silavadee Pool Spa Resort nestles high amongst limestone rocks offering the most heavenly views across the Gulf of Thailand, especially at night when the stars are glistening high above. Comprising 44 private pool villas and 36 deluxe rooms, Silavadee Pool Spa Resort has its own unique style with a 'back to nature' concept. This resort goes beyond the expected to create bespoke experiences crafted especially for you. One remarkable moment follows another to create lifelong memories. Be pampered with unforgettable luxury and romance. **LOCATION:** Situated on Laem Nan Beach, between Chaweng and Lamai Beach on Koh Samui, Silavadee Pool Spa Resort is enclosed by beautiful granite boulders, creating a private and secluded secret beach, with some of the best snorkelling available on the island. The resort is perfectly located to be close enough to the nightlife of Chaweng but far enough away to provide the ultimate in privacy and relaxation. **COUPLES WILL LOVE:** The romantic settings around the resort with breathtaking ocean views from the restaurants and your private pool villa. You can gaze at the stars from the rooftop bar, STAR, while sipping your favourite drinks. Couples will love everything about this beautiful resort because there's romantic experiences waiting around every corner. **CONTACT:** Koh Samui, Thailand, +66 77 960 555, silavadeeresort.com



THAILAND

Twinpalms Phuket

AT A GLANCE: With stylish, contemporary design, Twinpalms is a tranquil and secluded spa resort on the island of Phuket. Set around a magnificent pool, the superb accommodation options include lagoon pool rooms and suites and two-bedroom villas with private pool. The accommodation is perfect if you're planning your wedding here as all of your guests can be accommodated to suit their budget. **LOCATION:** Twinpalms Phuket is set just metres from Surin Beach, one of the most beautiful and least crowded stretches of sand on Phuket's west coast, in an area known as 'Millionaires' Row' because of its glamorous visitors and the million-dollar houses perched on the hills overlooking the Andaman Sea. Well away from the busy streets of Patong but just a ten-minute ride away from its shops, bars and restaurants, this location is the best of two worlds. Just around the corner is Surin shopping centre with boutiques, markets, restaurants and spas so everything is at your fingertips. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** A day or evening spent at Catch Beach Club right on the beach; an amazing and lavish voyage with Andaman Cruises; a Sunday brunch at Oriental Spoon Grill & Bar; and a romantic treatment for couples with Sun Spa by Esthederm at Twinpalms Phuket. **CONTACT:** Twinpalms Phuket, Phuket, Thailand, +66 76 316 500, twinpalms-phuket.com



THAILAND

Zeavola Resort

AT A GLANCE: By focusing on the simple things in life, the Zeavola Resort Phi Phi island team creates a friendly environment for honeymooners to enjoy crystal clear water, white beaches, excellent food and exciting activities. The resort is designed to resemble a Thai village with detached villas built from tropical hardwood that are rustic, romantic and offer everything a guest could expect. **LOCATION:** Situated on the quiet north coast of Phi Phi Don Island, on the tranquil shores of Laem Tong Beach in Krabi Province, the resort is well away from the Phi Phi party scene and offers a daily speedboat transfer from Phuket. The surrounding Phi Phi Marine National park allows guests to participate in world-class diving, touring and snorkelling experiences. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** A sunset cruise to the nearby Bamboo Island, complete with tapas and wine, is a romantic interlude couples will relish. For the ultimate in romance, indulge in a private candlelit dinner right on the beach with your very own waiter - simply amazing. Another must is a couple's massage before you leave, so you can relax completely and take the indelible memories of this heavenly place with you. For a luxury stay, honeymooners should book one of the three beachfront suites or an exclusive Pool Villa Suite located high up the forested hillside and overlooking the most amazing views of resort and sea. **CONTACT:** Zeavola Resort, Koh Phi Phi, Thailand, +66 75 627 024, zeavola.com



HAWAII

Aqua-Aston Hospitality

AT A GLANCE: With over 35 hotels and resorts, Aqua-Aston is Hawaii's leading hotel company and experts on where to stay and what to do on a romantic getaway. Whether you wish to seek a laid back beach resort with lush gardens, a fun twist on a Hawaii hotel or linger a little longer with the comforts of home in an apartment – Aqua-Aston has a diverse range of accommodations throughout Hawaii.

LOCATION: From full-service resorts and stylish hotels to condominium resorts and comfortable budget properties in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland, Honolulu-based Aqua-Aston Hospitality manages over 35 properties across five distinct brands designed to suit any lifestyle, taste or budget.

COPLES WILL LOVE: Aston Kaanapali Shores is a magnificent beachfront resort offering spacious studios and condominium suites overlooking tropical gardens and the shimmering ocean. Fully equipped kitchens and separate living areas in these well-appointed suites help to make it feel like your home away from home in paradise. Resort grounds feature two freshwater pools, on-site restaurant with open-air dining, yoga classes and tennis courts.

CONTACT: Aqua-Aston's 24/7 Hawaii-based call centre team is ready to assist ... they'll even tell you what the weather is like on Oahu in real time and get you prepped to really live like a local. +1.808.564.7603, AquaAston.com



Aston Kaanapali Shores

SINGAPORE

The Outpost Hotel at Sentosa

AT A GLANCE: The Outpost Hotel on Singapore's Sentosa Island offers a trendy island getaway for discerning travellers looking for a stylish, tailor-made experience. Guests will appreciate the attention to detail shown throughout this exclusive hotel, from the distinctive decor featuring a stunning black and white palette complemented by hints of gold and metallics to the fabulous rooftop Sky Pool. On check-in, guests can choose from a premium wine selection, fruits, energy bars, and snacks with five preferred items being placed into your minibar with compliments from the hotel – now that's service! **LOCATION:** Occupying a conserved heritage area on Singapore's Sentosa island, The Outpost Hotel is strategically located close to the Sentosa causeway just 15 minutes from major business districts and Singapore's key attractions, and 20 minutes from Changi Airport. The hotel is surrounded by Sentosa's world-class attractions, like Universal Studios Singapore, AJ Hackett, Mega-zip Adventure, and many beach bars and restaurants. **COPLES WILL LOVE:**

This brand new boutique hotel has the best place on Sentosa to enjoy a cocktail while watching the sunset – the infinity pool with swim-up bar. Relish a romantic dinner in the rooftop restaurant before retiring to your deluxe room with its incredible views over the South China Sea. **CONTACT:** The Outpost Hotel, Sentosa Island, Singapore, +65 6722 0801, info.toh@fareast.com.sg, theoutposthotel.com.sg

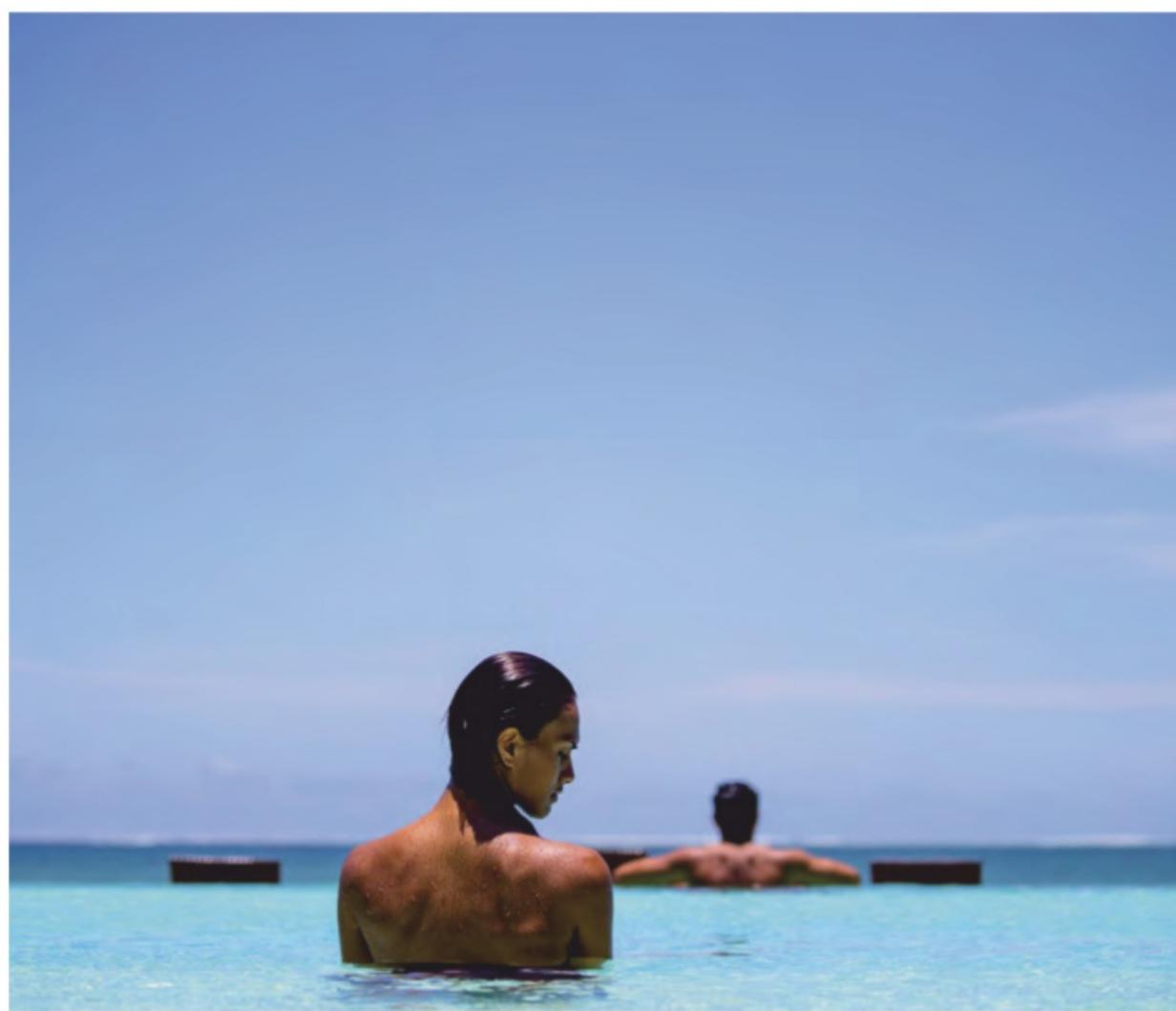


FIJI

InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa

AT A GLANCE: Hidden on 35-acres along the lush hills of Natadola and the stunning Natadola Bay is the InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, a jewel perfect for a couple's getaway. A secluded escape, the resort is framed with a white sandy beach and an aqua-blue ocean-facing lagoon. Complemented with world-class facilities and with 266 luxury modern rooms and suites plus 50 luxurious suites at the iconic Club InterContinental, the resort offers a world of Fijian charm and heightened personalised experiences. From adventure diving with the sharks to an excursion to one of the nearby villages, or just unwinding poolside at the serene adults-only infinity pool overlooking the Pacific Ocean, there is always something to do to suit your interests.

LOCATION: On the Coral Coast a short 45-minute drive or a premium 15-minute helicopter ride from Nadi International Airport. **COPLES WILL LOVE:** Indulge in a private beachfront cabana dinner for two with contemporary local and international cuisine and your own personal waiter. Splurge with a Cleopatra bathing ritual in the privacy of your balcony or terrace; a luxurious bath with tropical flower petals, a bottle of sparkling and candlelight to set the mood. Add a couple's spa treatment at Spa InterContinental to complete your idyllic romantic escape. **CONTACT:** InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, Natadola Bay, Viti Levu, Fiji Islands, +679 673 3455 or +679 673 3300, enquires.fiji@ihg.com, fiji.intercontinental.com



COOK ISLANDS

Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort

AT A GLANCE: Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort is the only resort in the Cook Islands with overwater bungalows and the only resort set directly on spectacular Aitutaki Lagoon – it's a true bucket list destination. The founder of Lonely Planet, Tony Wheeler, nominated Aitutaki as "the world's most beautiful island." Steve Davey, the writer of *Unforgettable Places to See Before You Die* called Aitutaki Lagoon, "the world's most beautiful lagoon". The editor of Sports Illustrated's Swimsuit Edition, M.J. Day, raved that, "... hands down, Aitutaki is the most beautiful place I have ever seen in my life!" Time you saw it too! **LOCATION:** Aitutaki is part of the Cook Islands, and lies just west of Tahiti.

COPLES WILL LOVE For the best of both, book a couple of nights in an Overwater Bungalow and a couple of nights in the completely private Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa. For incurable romantics, the night sky here is one of the clearest in the world, twinkling with a trillion stars of the Milky Way so why not indulge in a private, toes-in-the-sand starlight dinner – spectacular! And don't miss a day spent exploring the wonders and beauty of this amazing lagoon with a day out on a local boat, swimming, snorkelling and simply enjoying this incredible place. On sister island Rarotonga, enjoy a pre-or post-stay at boutique resort, Sanctuary Rarotonga-on the beach-Adults-Only. **CONTACT** Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort, Cook Islands, +682-31200, info@aitutakilagoonresort.com, aitutakilagoonresort.com



ADVERTISERS' INDEX

Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort	8	Far East Hospitality - The Outpost Hotel	22	Saletoga Sands Resort & Spa	132
Alamanda Palm Cove	131	Fitzroy Island Resort	131	Sanctuary in the Pocket	122
Amadea Resort & Villas	42	Girraween Environmental Lodge	124	Seabreeze Resort Samoa	60
Amari Koh Samui	72	Hidden Lodge	132	Secrets on the Lake	126
Amarterra Villas Bali Nusa Dua	52	InterContinental Bali Resort	55	Silavadee Pool Spa Resort	68
Aqua-Aston Hospitality	4	Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa	11	Noosa Blue Resort	127
Aryaduta Bali	44	Island Point Coastal Retreats	118	The Frames at Paringa	118
Azur Queenstown	132	Kayumanis	12	The Havannah	10
Balgownie Estate Bendigo Winery Retreat	119	Kingfisher Bay Resort	129	The Mouses House Rainforest Retreat	123
Bali Dynasty Resort	44	Maya Ubud Resort	7	The Samaya	56+57
Bali Mandira Beach Resort & Spa	16	Mirage Whitsundays	130	The Sarayi Hotel	130
Bannisters	121	Mount French Lodge	124	The Sebel Noosa	128
Beach Road Holiday Homes	126	Netanya Noosa	OBC	The Tongsai Bay Cottages and Hotel	62+63
Big Blue Backyard	119	Oceans Mooloolaba	125	Tourism Authority of Thailand	61
Calabash Bay Lodge	121	Outdoor Travel	80	Tourism Noosa	116
Cape Panwa Hotel	19	Owl Head Lodge	122	Tourism Port Douglas & Daintree	114+115
Centara Hotels and Resorts	31	Paperbark Camp	120	Tourism Solomons	14
Chapung Sebali	36+37	Park Hyatt Maldives	IFC+1	Tourism Whitsundays	2+3
Crystal Creek Rainforest Retreat	100	Picture Point Terraces	127	Twinpalms Phuket	74
Culgoa Point Beach Resort	125	Pinnacles Resort & Spa	128	Woodlands Rainforest Retreat	120
Eratap Beach Resort	35	Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort	35	Xanadu - Main Beach Resort	123
		Sala Resorts and Spas	64	Zeavola Resort	72

HOLIDAYS FOR COUPLES

Sign up to the Weekly Edition at
www.holidaysforcouples.travel

for your inbox drop of destination stories and special offers.

W A N T
T O S E E
M O R E
D R E A M Y
escapes
F O R T W O ?

Follow us on  [holidaysforcouples](#)



Follow *Holidays for Couples* on Facebook and bookmark www.holidaysforcouples.travel for daily travel content and the best destinations for couples in Australia, Asia, The Pacific Islands and beyond!